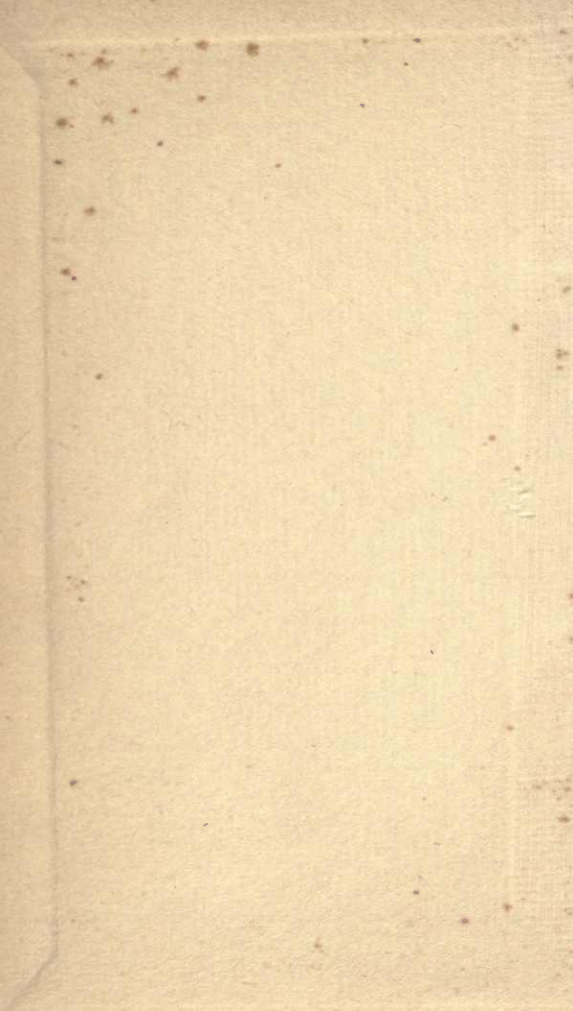
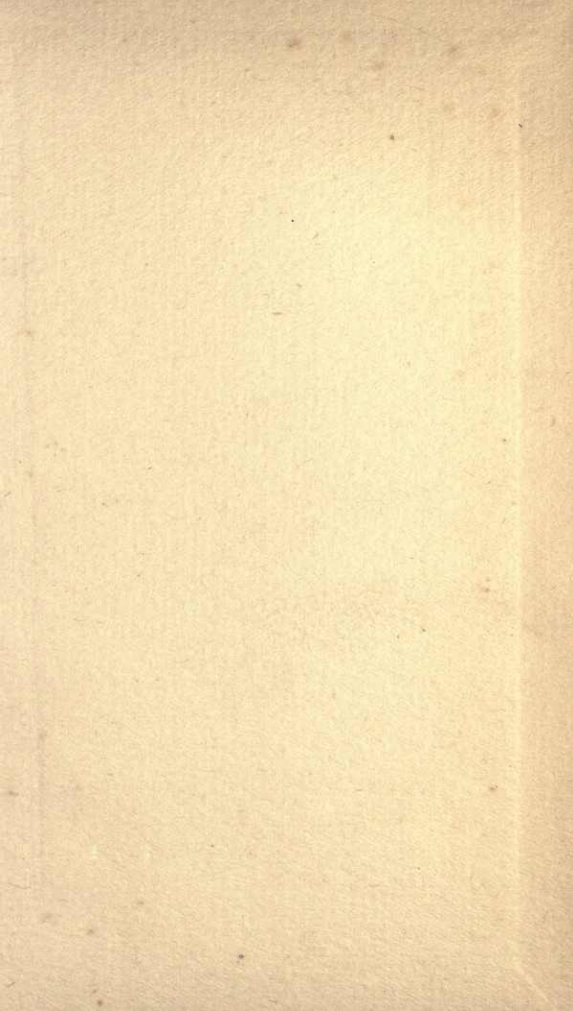
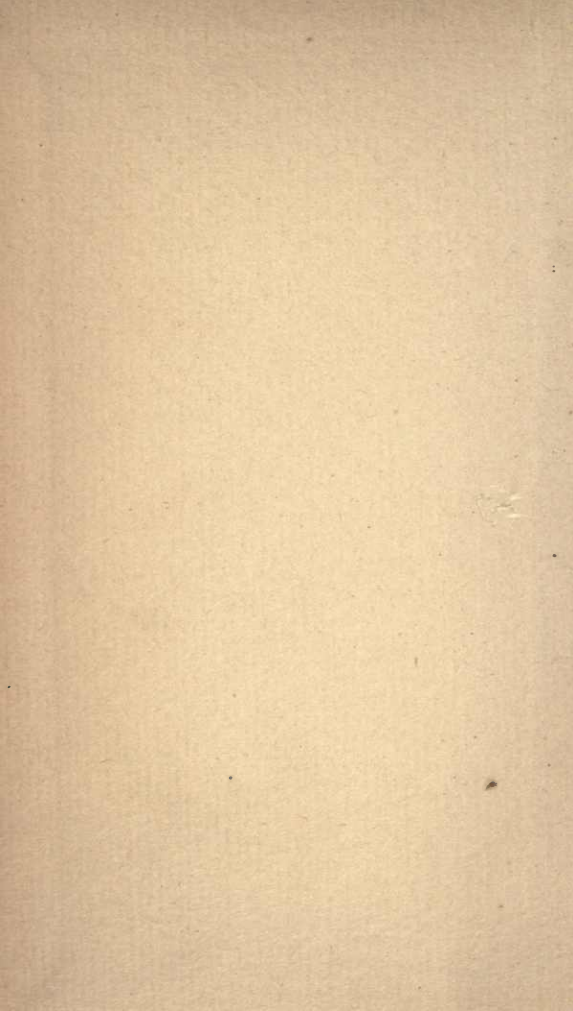


POEMS BY MRS. PIATT











P O E M S

BY

SARAH PIATT

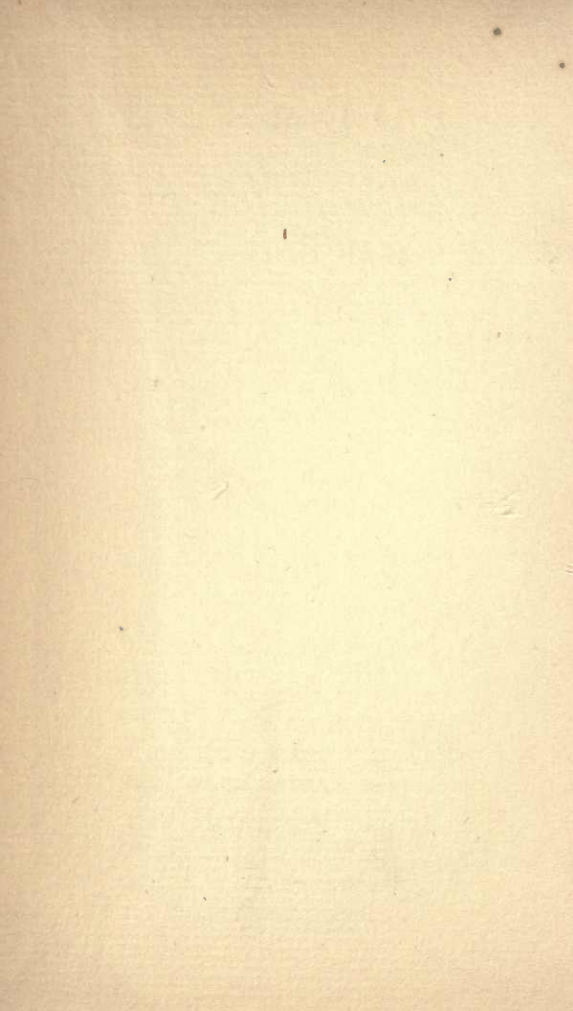
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THE WITCH IN THE GLASS, ETC.



THE WITCH IN THE GLASS.

“My mother says I must not pass
Too near that glass ;
She is afraid that I will see
A little witch that looks like me,
With a red, red mouth to whisper low
The very thing I should not know !”

“Alack for all your mother’s care !
A bird of the air,
A wistful wind, or (I suppose
Sent by some hapless boy) a rose,
With breath too sweet, will whisper low
The very thing you should not know !”

MY NEIGHBOUR'S RING.

I NEVER envied his fair, fruitful lands,
His stately house, his slaves, nor anything,
In the old days, for on his too-white hands
I saw and knew the ring.

To-night there is strange news abroad, I'm told.
—The ring, the ring! It is the same, ah me!
That to their lord the fishermen of old
Brought back from the deep sea! ¹

THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE.

THIS is the Master, who but he?—

(Where did you think to find him?)—

Here in the cradle. Come and see.

—Why, surely we *have* to mind him!

Wait; you must be as still as death:

He is sleeping now so sweetly.

One hasn't the right to draw one's breath

Till he is awake completely.

Should he want the wedding-ring from her hand,

(No matter if he would lose it)

There is not a lady in all the land

Could have the heart to refuse it.

Should he choose to reach for a crown, I say,

(It is gold, and he could not break it,)

Why, is there a king in the world to-day

Who would not let him take it?

What cardinal would not lend him his hat,
To give him a minute's pleasure ?
And where is the good, grey beard, as to that,
Which he could not pull at leisure ?

But, here he is !—do you see his eyes ?
Now what do you want ? It may be
He will hear you, after his first surprise,
——There 's nothing you want of the baby !

But everything is his, you know,
(And no matter whose the rest is !)
From the blue little bird that chirps so low
To the oak-tree where its nest is !

——It is only *work* that you want, indeed ?
Could you do the work of twenty,
The baby will give you all you need ;
Ask him : he has work in plenty !

COUNSEL.

[IN THE SOUTH.]

My boy, not of your will nor mine
You keep the mountain path and wait,
Restless, for evil gold to shine
And hold you to your fate.

A stronger Hand than yours gave you
The lawless sword. You know not why.
That you must live is all too true,
And—other men must die.

My boy, be brigand, if you must.
But face the traveller in his track;
Stand one to one,—and never thrust
The dagger in his back.

. . . . My boy, if Christ must be betrayed,
And you must the betrayer be,
Oh, marked before the worlds were made !
What help is there for me ?

Ah, tell the prophets in their graves,
Who ask of you such blood as this,
“I take Him, then, with swords and staves,—
I will not with a kiss !”

HER DOUBTFUL COMPLIMENT.

“OH, mother,” sobbed the troubled little maid,
“Please tell me, will you, that it is not true ;
It breaks my heart : that hateful Rose, she said—
Just think of it !—she said I looked like you !”

THE GIFT OF TEARS.

THE legend says : In Paradise

God gave the world to man. Ah me !

The woman lifted up her eyes :

“ Woman, I have but tears for thee.”

But tears ? And she began to shed,

Thereat, the tears that comforted.

(No other beautiful woman breathed,

No rival among men had he.

The seraph's sword of fire was sheathed,

The golden fruit hung on the tree.

Her lord was lord of all the earth,

Wherein no child had wailed its birth.)

“ Tears to a bride ?” “ Yea, therefore tears.”

“ In Eden ?” “ Yea, and tears therefore.”

Ah, bride in Eden, there were fears

In the first blush your young cheek wore,

Lest that first kiss had been too sweet,

Lest Eden withered from your feet !

Mother of women ! Did you see
How brief your beauty, and how brief,
Therefore, the love of it must be,
In that first garden, that first grief?
Did those first drops of sorrow fall
To move God's pity for us all ?

Oh, sobbing mourner by the dead—
One watcher at the grave grass-grown !
Oh, sleepless for some darling head
Cold-pillowed on the prison-stone,
Or wet with drowning seas ! He knew,
Who gave the gift of tears to you !

THE ANSWER OF THE GARDENER.

HE leant, at sunset, on his spade.

(Oh, but the child was sweet to see,
The one who in the orchard played !)

He called : " I've planted you a tree ! "

The boy looked at it for a while,

Then at the radiant woods below ;
And said, with wonder in his smile—

" Why don't you put the leaves on, though ? "

The gardener, with a reverent air,

Lifted his eyes, took off his hat—
" The Other Man, the One up there,"
He answered, " He must see to that."

TWO HUNTERS.

[ANECDOTE OF VICTOR EMMANUEL, KING OF ITALY.]

THEY met in the heat of a Southern sun.
And how did they look? Oh, I fancy one
Was a picturesque peasant, such as you may
See in a lover's part, at the play.

This hunter was nothing at all, you see,
And the other was—everything! But he
Was none too handsome, let us suppose,
Although his face out-reddened the rose.

These two Italians met, as I said,
In a lonesome place where a hare lay dead.
“It is mine—I shot it,” one stormily cried;
“It is mine—I shot it,” the other replied.

So the beautiful youth went home that night
With his black eyes blacker yet from the fight.
“Now,” the genial gentleman said, “it is mine—
And” (this to himself) “by the right divine.”

At morning a carriage was sent to bring
The wondering peasant before the king.
“Do you know me, sir?” “I’d the honour to fight
With your Majesty, as I fear, last night.”

“And I saw by the shot, when the hare was dressed,
That it was not mine—forgive me the rest :
There’s enough for us both—and it was not mine ;
Come in, I beg you, with me, and dine.”

THE SERMON OF A STATUE.

[IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.]

SUDDENLY, in the melancholy place

With sculptured king and priest and knight
assembled,

The music called us. Then, with kindly grace,

On a gold head was laid a hand that trembled :

"You little stranger, come," the verger cried,

"And hear the sermon." "No," the child replied ;—

A moment standing on his New-World will,

There in the Corner of the Poets, holding

His cap with pretty reverence, as still

As any of that company, he said, folding

His arms : "But let that canon wait." And then :

"I want to stay here with these marble men ;—

"If they could preach, I'd listen !" Ah, they can,

Another thought. It pleased the boy to linger

In the pale presence of the peerless man

Who pointed to his text with moveless finger.

Laughing with blue-eyed wonder, he said : "Look,
This one (but do you know him ?) has a book !"

. . . I know him. Ay, and all the world knows him,—

Among the many poets the one only !

On that high head the stained gloom was dim ;

In those fixed eyes the look of gods was lonely.

Kings at his feet, to whom his hand gave fame,

Lay, dust and ashes, shining through his name.

I heard him. With the still voice of the dead

From that stone page, right careless of derision,

Sad jesters of a faithless age ! he read

How the great globe would vanish like a vision,

With all that it inhabit. . . . And hath he

Then writ but one word, and that—Vanity ?

AFTER HER FIRST PARTY.

"It was just lovely, and, mamma, my dress
Was much the prettiest there, the boys all said :
They said too that I looked—my best. I guess
These ribbons suited me. You see, that red,
You did not fancy, lighted up so well.
Somebody told me I was quite a belle.

"I wish you didn't want me to wear white,
With just a flower or two. Rose wears such
things.
They're so old-fashioned. She was such a fright !
I wish that I had fifty diamond rings,—
I'd wear them all at once ! I'd almost paint,
Before I'd look like Rose. She's such a saint."

"I thought you were the best of friends." "We
are,—
Only we hate each other ! That is what
The best of friends do—in our school. How far
Away you look ! Forgive me. I forgot.

I've made you sad. *I'll* love the whole world too,
I guess, mamma—when I'm as old as you!

"Why don't you listen, mamma? You must be

Thinking of Adam. Here's a bud he gave

You once in Eden—shut up here, you see,

In this old book!" "That grew upon a grave."

"Oh, I'll not touch it, then. I wish that pearls

Would grow on trees—but not for other girls.

"Now, mamma, please to hear me to the end.

The handsomest of all the boys last night

Looked like that picture of—your brother's friend.

He hardly spoke to Rose. (Oh, I'm not quite

An angel yet. I shall be, I suppose,

Sometime.) I'm glad he hardly spoke to Rose.

"I wonder, mamma, did you ever go

To a first party. And what did you wear?

—How odd you must have looked! But tell me,
though,

About your dress. How many girls were there?"

"Fifty, perhaps." "There were some boys, I'd guess?"

"Yes, there was one"——"And he was handsome?"

"Yes."

“Where is he now, do you think?” “I do not know.

(In some sweet foreign country, it may be,
Among the palms.”) “He might have written,
though,

In all these years.” “He cannot write.” “I see.
What a strange party! Fifty girls—oh dear!
And one boy—and he couldn’t write? How queer!”

THE CHILD MOZART AND ST. JOHN OF
BOHEMIA.

THE two stood in a faëry place
On some Bohemian hill.

The boy seemed not of our own race,
He was so slight and still ;

A lovely alien, who had strayed
When some strange star went by,
Out of its shining ways, and stayed
On earth, he knew not why.

Bare-headed, on that lonesome height,
Where yet the dew was cold,
He took, as by some gracious right,
The sun's salute of gold ;

With lambs, above the world of men,
There in the world of birds,
So looked the young Apollo, when
He—quite forgot the herds.

Perhaps it was the winds and bees,
Perhaps his sweet ears rung
With snatches of the melodies
The morning stars had sung.

Yet this fair little foreign guest,
Born somewhere in the sky,
Knew—(if the truth must be confest)
The boy knew how to cry.

“Look, sister, look,” he sadly said,
While great tears gathered slow,
“There is no butter on my bread.”
She answered him : “I know.

“We are so poor, and that is why.”
“Well, what do people do
When they are poor ?” “Sometimes they cry.”
(Their mother did, she knew.)

“But don’t they pray, too, sometimes?” “Yes.”

“Then, good St. John, I say
My mother needs a prettier dress;—
Please send one right away.”

(St. John, hurled from a parapet
At some wild Emperor’s frown :
Five stars brood on the Moldau yet,
Five stars that saw him drown.)

“We want a new piano, too ;
Our old one used to play,
But it forgets its music. You
Are kind to all who pray ?

“And there’s the butter, too. But see,—
Why, here he is !” And then
Came laughing from behind a tree
The handsomest of men,

Clothed in dark forest-green, his head
High as an oak’s need be,
And shadowed by a plume. He said :
“Come, little ones, with me.”

And so the children's saint, the blest,
The beautiful St. John,
Walked with them—(rather oddly drest
You think. Of this anon).

That day a sudden dinner, such
As they had never seen,
Came to their table. And how much
They thanked the saint in green !

Bright as an autumn-leaf in bloom
Their mother moved, and yet
That night—the absence in her room
Made cheek and pillow wet.

That night the old piano, too,
Grieved like a living thing,—
For the blonde boy, right well it knew,
Had vanished with the King.

(The King, I said, but, on my word,
It's quite another thing,—
Somewhere in history I have heard
The Queen was then the King.¹)

¹ “ *Long live our King—Maria Theresa !* ”

Into a place of shining state
The child-musician went,
In violet velvet, to await
Court-kiss and compliment.

. . . And lo, a palace maiden bright,
A vision to admire,
A creature made of rose and white
And gold, in brave attire !

The boy raised his flower-face as she
Passed him with slow regret :
“I say, and will you marry me,
Miss Marie Antoinette ?”

“I dare not ; what would mother say ?—
I mean the Empress, child,”
The enchanted princess answered. They
Who listened stared and smiled.

She tossed her shining head a bit,
With one bright backward glance ;
And Wolfgang Mozart wept when it
Gilded the axe of France.

PASSING THE GIPSY CAMP.

So, here they are on the hills again ;
They always come with the robins hither.
But where do they stay when the wind and rain
Make the women's faces wither ?

They come from Egypt, as I have heard.
(Didn't Pharaoh look like that brown fellow ?)
Yes, picturesque is a right fine word
For rags in scarlet and yellow.

See the wide straw hats, the purplish hair,
The doubtful eyes, and the graceless graces ;
The tents, and the wild fires, here and there,
In the greenest, shyest places.

The oldest, wisest of all comes here.
Last May her promise was sweet as honey,—
(I wish, with the interest of a year,
She would give me back my money !)

What did she say ? Why, she only said,
Frowning a trifle, and bending double,
(Never a star had the grey cheat read,)
“Wait, lady, you have seen trouble.”

How did she know ? (Why, I think she knew,
For this one reason, and many others :)
Oh, she knew, at least, that I had seen *you*
At war with your valiant brothers !

She said my trouble would end, forsooth,
And so it will—when the moon is ready
To light my grave. So, it *was* the truth,
But—you look at me too steady !

If you are afraid, then speak her fair
(She isn't a witch like Macbeth's witches ;)
But—what should the rosiest children care
For glory and sorrow and riches ?

My good, weird woman, (O, what a noise
Of crowing, neighing, babbling and snarling !)
What will become of some poor little boys ?——
Yes, the youngest *is* a darling !

. . . There ! she will turn one's head with the stuff
That dreams are made of, if one will let her !
I can tell you, and true enough,
Something as good, or better.

Never the President will you be,
None of you—not if you do grow older ;
Nor the greatest of generals—bright with three
Stars or so, on the shoulder.

But the pretty summers will come to you,
With blossoms to find and wings to follow ;
And I'd say a world where strawberries grew,
Of a truth was not quite hollow.

Sometimes you will come to grief, no doubt.
Most of us do. But we have to take it.
. . . Oh, I should have left the trouble out
Of this world—had I helped to make it !

At last you will shut your eyes and forget
That red-birds fly, or that cow-bells tinkle ;
And sleep, though the suns shall rise and set,—
Oh, longer than Rip Van Winkle !

THE WATCH OF A SWAN.

I READ somewhere that a swan, snow-white,
In the sun all day, in the moon all night,
Alone by a little grave would sit
Waiting, and watching it.

Up out of the lake her mate would rise,
And call her down with his piteous cries
Into the waters still and dim ;—
With cries she would answer him.

Hardly a shadow would she let pass
Over the baby's cover of grass ;
Only the wind might dare to stir
The lily that watched with her.

Do I think that the swan was an angel? Oh,
I think it was only a swan, you know,
That for some sweet reason, winged and wild,
Had the love of a bird for a child.

THE THOUGHT OF ASTYANAX BESIDE

IÜLUS.⁽²⁾

(AFTER READING VIRGIL'S STORY OF ANDROMACHE IN EXILE.)

YES, all the doves begin to moan,—
But it is not the doves alone.
Some trouble, that you never heard
In any tree from breath of bird,
That reaches back to Eden lies
Between your wind-flower and my eyes.

I fear it was not well, indeed,
Upon so sad a day to read
So sad a story. But the day
Is full of blossoms, do you say,—
And how the sun does shine? I know.
These things do make it sadder, though.

You'd cry, if you were not a boy,
About this mournful tale of Troy?
Then do not laugh at me, if I—
Who am too old, you know, to cry—
Just hide my face a while from you,
Down here among these drops of dew.

. . . Must I for sorrow look so far ?
This baby headed like a star,
Afraid of Hector's horse-hair plume
(His one sweet child, whose bitter doom
So piteous seems—oh, tears and tears !—)
Has he been dust three thousand years ?

Yet when I see his mother fold
The pretty cloak she stitched with gold
Around another boy, and say :
“ He would be just your age to-day,
With just your hands, your eyes, your hair ”—
Her grief is more than I can bear.

A TRIUMPH OF TRAVEL.

AT EDINBURGH.

THERE rose the tragic palace towers
Against the moon. (The tale was true !)
The Prince's Gardens faint with flowers
And still with statue-spectres grew.

There, on its rock, the Castle lay,
An awful shadow-shape forlorn,
Among the night-lamps, and, by day—
The place where James the First was born.

There, for the Covenanters' sake,
One haunts the grasses of Grey Friars ;
There grim John Knox had loved to shake
His right hand full of ghostly fires.

There, changed to marble, Walter Scott
Received the world. And Burns of Ayr,
With all his loves and debts forgot,
A bronze immortal met you there.

No whit the seven-years' stranger cared ;
As under gables high and still
Through immemorial dust he fared,
He spoke his heart out with a will :

"I'm tired of Holyrood, that's what !
And all the other things," he said ;
"There's nothing in it ! She is not ;—
I mean Queen Mary. She is dead.

"I'm glad I did just one thing there."
(In vain they showed him "Rizzio's bluid.")
"I put my hand on every chair
That said 'Don't Touch' at Holyrood !"

THE STORY OF A STORM.

[TOLD BY A LITTLE BOY WHO HAD HEARD "STORIES
FROM HOMER."]

"THINGS floated away and the day turned dark
And papa he wasn't at home, you know ;
And we didn't have any dove or ark,
Nor mountain where we could go,
Like they used to have, one other year,—
That time when the other flood was here.

"Then, the wind kept blowing the oak-tree down,
(The Lord didn't know about the nest !)
And I thought this world was going to drown.
——Did Louis tell you the rest ?
Well, if he didn't—well then—well,
I think—Somebody will have to tell.

"Now, this was the way : One other night
(I wish that Louis had told you then)
When the moon was red—why, we had a fight
About one of Homer's men.

(That is the reason we didn't speak.)
He said that Hector wasn't a Greek!

"But I thought it wouldn't do to die
And not say even one single word
To Louis before I went to the sky,—
So I told him about the bird,
And the other birds out there in the nest
That their mother hadn't even dressed!

"If it hadn't been for the rain, you see,
We never could have been friends again.
And, who would I have to play with me—
If it hadn't been for the rain?
And Louis said he was glad to speak,
For he *thought* that Hector wasn't a Greek!"

THE COMING OUT OF HER DOLL.

YOUNG GIRL-GRADUATE TO HER MOTHER.

“Now I begin to think it’s time that Rose
Should wear a train. She’s a young lady now.
You really cannot guess how much she knows.
(She’s read some charming novels, anyhow.)

“How sweet she’d look in a Commencement dress,
White satin and illusion, and some pearls.
Her gloves must have six buttons, and—I guess
She’d get more flowers than all the other girls.

“I fancy she should have some company.
(Papa, he always comes home late and tired.)
And if she only had—some one, you see,
To take her out, she would be much admired.

“Oh, you forget. You brought her home to me
Once on my birthday, years and years ago.
She could not be a baby yet, you see ;—
Why, then I was a child myself, you know !”

IN STREET AND GARDEN.

I.

A CHILD'S CONCLUSION.

"MAMMA," he said, "you ought to know
The place. It's name is wicked, though.
Not China. No. But if you fell
Through China you would be there! Well.

"Fred said somebody very bad,
Named Satan, stayed down there, and had
Oh, such a fire to burn things! You
Just never mind. It can't be true.

"Because I've digged and digged to see
Where all that fire could ever be,
And looked and looked down through the dark,
And never saw a single spark.

"But Heaven is sure ; because if I
Look up, I always see the sky—
Sometimes the gold-gates shine clear through—
And when you see a thing, it's true!"

II.

SELF-COMFORTED.

THE ragged child across the street
Stared at the child that looked so sweet :

“ I ’ll have a whiter dress than you,
And wear some prettier rosebuds, too ;

“ And not be proud a bit,” she said,
“ I thank you, miss,—when I am dead.”

III.

LITTLE GUIDO’S LOST PICTURES.

THE world may keep the best he gave to it.

That may be worth the world itself. Who knows?
Here, you who are his namesake, come and sit,
And read about him, by this budding rose.

The world may keep the Aurora. As for me,
I ’d rather see the pictures that he drew
In the divine dust, there, of Italy,
When Guido was a sweet, dark boy like you.

THE LITTLE COWHERD.

"COME, look at her and you will love her.

Go, lead her now through pleasant places,
And teach her that our New-World's clover
Is sweet as Jersey Island daisies.

"Yes, you may do a little playing

Close to the gate, my pretty warder;
But, meanwhile, keep your cow from straying
Across the elfin people's border."

So to the boy his mother jested

About his light task, lightly heeding,
While in the flowering grass he rested
The magic book that he was reading.

At sundown for the cow's returning
The milkmaid waited long, I'm thinking.
Hours later, by the moon's weird burning,
Did fairy-folk have cream for drinking?

. . . What of the boy? By hill and hollow,
Through bloom and brier, till twilight ended,
His book had charmed him on to follow
The cow—the one that Cadmus tended!

THEIR HEROIC LESSON.

[LEARNED FROM HOMER.¹]

I LET the sun stand still, this lonesome day,
And hardly heard the very baby coo,
(Meanwhile the world went on—the other way !)
That I might watch the siege of Troy with you.

The great Achilles (whom we knew) was there—
His shining shield was what we knew him by ;
And Hector with his plume of horse's hair
Frightened his child and laughed to hear it cry.

Poor Hector ! Never sorrow for the dead,
In these three thousand piteous after years,
Breathed into sweeter words than Helen said
Beside him, through the dropping of her tears.

We grieved with Priam for his gracious son.
Much-wandering Ulysses with his craft
Cheated us through strange seas—and every one
Came straight to grief with him upon his raft.

¹ *Stories from Homer*, by Rev. Alfred J. Church.

Not one among you but could draw his bow,
After its rest in Ithaca, and bring
A suitor down!—In the dark backward, oh,
How sad the swallow-twitter of its string!

Now, that it's time to shut the shadowy book,
(Ah me, they clash together, left and right,
And Greek meets Greek—or Trojan! Only look!)—
What have you learned from it? You say: "To
fight!"

A NEW KNIGHT.

TO A SCHOOLBOY.

HERE you sit with a picture-book,
And stare at a knight with his armour on,
While the bird that waited for you to look
At his scarlet coat is surely gone.
He sings too low and he sings too near?—
It is Roland's horn you would like to hear?

Why, the horn of Roland was only blown
Because there was something wrong, you know,
When the world was dark. But the world has
grown

A trifle brighter since then, and so
We are looking around for some new knight
Whose horn shall tell us of something right.

You like the one in the picture best ?

Oh, he *does* look well in his plume and steel ;
But only fancy if you were dressed

In that odd fashion, how you would feel—
Riding along, while the boys looked through
The schoolroom windows and laughed at you !

You would storm some fortress?—You never will,

You sleep and you dream too much for that.
Take care lest the boy below the hill,

With the one wild rose in his torn straw hat,
Who climbs the rocks, while they 're dim with
dew,

To bring you milk, make his squire of you !

THE STORY OF LITTLE HENRY.

[AN INCIDENT FROM THE NEWSPAPER.]

YES, brown and rosy, perhaps, like you,
Was the little child they have not found ;
Or perhaps his eyes, like yours, were blue,
And his poor sweet head faint-golden too—
The little child who was drowned.

I hardly think his mother was right—
Did she have it ?—not to give him the bread ;
But he shut the door, and then—“ Good night ;”
(Yes, he went alone and without any light)—
“ I’ll never come home,” he said.

Poor little child, he was seven years old.
Why, the bird’s wild nest was new in the tree ;
There were roses enough for him to hold
In his two small hands. ——But the river is cold
In the summer, even, you see.

From the trouble of tears where did he go ?—

Where did he go with his two bare feet ?

That life was bitter he seemed to know,

(What manner of bread did he think to eat ?)—

Did he know that death was sweet ?

THE OLD KING'S ATONEMENT.

TOLD TO A BOY ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

THIS is the story that a dead man writ—

Five hundred years ago it must be, quite ;
Worlds full of children listened once to it,
Who do not ask for stories now at night.

Worlds full of children, who have followed him,
The King they learned to love and to forgive,
About whose feet the North-snows once lay dim,
To the sweet land where he has gone to live.

He was a boy whose purple cap could show
As true a peacock's-plume as ever fanned
Bright royal hair, but in the gracious glow
Of his fair head strange things, it seems, were
planned :

"To be a prince is well enough," thought he,
 "But then would it not be a braver thing
To be—my father, only young! To be,"
 He whispered, oh, so low—"to be the King!—

"My father, who may live for years and years.
 And I meanwhile?—Prince Henry to the last!
Sin, by God's grace, may be washed out with tears,
 And some day I'll have time to pray and fast."

He blew a blast that wailed from field to field;
 Then, with his sword's point hurled his father
 down,
And bared his own dark forehead, and revealed
 Thereon the sudden lightning of the crown.

But soon that fire of jewels round his head
 Burned to his heart. He sat forlorn with grief:
"We'll send across the mountains there," he said,
 "To our great Priest in Italy for relief."

His Holiness sat thinking in his town
 Of Rome five minutes, or, it may be, more;
His scarlet Cardinals pulled their brave hats down,
 And thought as Cardinals never thought before.

"Tell him," the reverend Father said, "to build
Strong churches, and give freely of his gold
To our poor brothers." So his realm was filled
With monks and abbeys. But—shall truth be
told ?—

His father's shadow would not let him be,—
Till, one fine night, out of the pleasant skies,
Mary looked down, remembering that he
Was once a child, with sweet half-human eyes :

"He shall be glad again, for he shall make
The little ones glad in memory of my Son,"
She said. Her aureole flashed the King awake ;
He thought, "Let my Lord's Mother's will be done."

So from his head the cruel crown he shook,
And from his breast the ermine cloak he tore,
And, wrapped in serge, his lonesome way he took
In the weird night from dreaming door to door.

A very Saint of Christmas in the moon,
Followed by glimmering evergreens and toys,
The old King looked. And did they wake too soon,
Those blonde-haired, blue-eyed, far-back girls and
boys ?

I only know that still the peasants say,
In his far country, that a strange King walks
All night before the Lord Christ's glad birthday,
And leaves no track—a King who never talks!

And sometimes children, stealing from their bed,
To look if the slow morning yet be near,
Have seen his sweeping beard and hooded head,
And grey, still smile, with never any fear.

They know the dawn will light the loveliest things,
Left in the silence by their silent friend.
They know the strange King is the best of kings,
And mean to love him till the world shall end.

THE CHRISTENING.

IN vain we broider cap and cloak, and fold
 The long robe, white and rare ;
In vain we serve on dishes of red gold,
 Perhaps, the rich man's fare ;
In vain we bid the fabled folk who bring
 All gifts the world holds sweet :
This one, forsooth, shall give the child to sing ;
 To move like music this shall charm its feet ;
 This help the cheek to blush, the heart to beat.

Unto the christening there shall surely come
 The Uninvited Guest,
The evil mother, weird and wise, with some
 Sad purpose in her breast.

Yea, and though every spinning-wheel be stilled
In all the country round,
Behold, the prophecy must be fulfilled ;
The turret with the spindle will be found,
And the white hand will reach and take the
wound.

COMFORT THROUGH A WINDOW.

(CHILD WITHIN TO TRAMP WITHOUT.)

It's not so nice here as it looks,
With china that keeps breaking so,
And five of Mr. Tennyson's books
Too fine to look in—is it, though?

If you just had to sit here (Well!)
In satin chairs too blue to touch,
And look at flowers too sweet to smell,
In vases—would you like it much?

If you see any flowers, they grow,
And you can find them in the sun.
These are the ones we buy, you know,
In winter-time—when there are none!

Then you can sit on rocks, you see,
And walk about in water, too—
Because you have no shoes! Dear me!
How many things they let you do!

Then you can sleep out in the shade
All day, I guess, and all night too,
Because—you know, you're not afraid
Of other fellows just like you!

You have no house like this, you know,
(Where mamma's cross, and ladies call)—
You have the world to live in, though,
And that's the prettiest place of all!

HIS MOTHER'S WAY.⁽³⁾

“ My Mamma just knows how to cry
About an old glove or a ring,
Or even a stranger going by
The gate, or—almost anything !

“ She cried till both her eyes were red
About *him*, too. (I saw her, though !)
And he was just a ——, Papa said.
(We have to call them that, you know.)

“ She cried about the shabbiest shawl,
Because it cost too much to buy ;
But Papa cannot cry at all,
For he 's a man. And that is why !

“ Why, if his coat was not right new,
And if the yellow bird would die
That sings, and my white kitten too,
Or even himself, *he* would not cry.

“ He said that he would sleep to-night
With both the pistols at his head,
Because that ragged fellow might
Come back. That’s what my Papa said !

“ But Mamma goes and hides her face
There in the curtains, and peeps out
At him, and almost spoils the lace ;—
And he is what she cries about !

“ She says he looks so cold, so cold,
And has no pleasant place to stay !
Why can’t he work ? He is not old ;
His eyes are blue—they’ve not turned
grey.”

So the boy babbled. . . . Well, sweet sirs,
Flushed with your office-fires you write
Your laugh down at such grief as hers ;
But are these women foolish quite ?

—I know. But, look you, there may be
Stains sad as wayside dust, I say,
Upon your own white hands (ah, me !)
No woman’s tears can wash away.

One sees her baby's dimple hold
More love than you can measure. . . .

Then

Nights darken down on heads of gold,
Till wind and frost try wandering men !

But there are prisons made for such,
Where the strong roof shuts out the snow ;
And bread (that you would scorn to touch)
Is served them there ? I know, I know.

Ah ! while you have your books, your ease,
Your lamp-light leisure, jests, and wine,
Fierce outside whispers, if you please,
Moan, each: "These things are also mine!"

A TRAGEDY OF THE NIGHT.

[AT AN EDINBURGH STREET CROSSING.]

SHE started suddenly from the moving mass.

The wind sprang up and caught her by the shawl,
And held her like a thing that dared not pass,—

Then shook her for an instant. That was all.

Once beautiful, and still almost a child!

She wore her wet hair round her with a grace.
I saw the great eyes staring black and wild
As the scared lamplights shuddered from her face.

Upon her track there followed such a cry :

“Will you come back, or no?” was all it said,—
“Will you come back, or no?” The Voice wailed by;
On—to the Pit?—the girlish phantom fled.

THE CONFESSION OF MY NEIGHBOUR.

[AFTER SHE HAD BEEN FORTUNATE.]

YES, this is what my neighbour said that night,
In the still shadow of her stately house,
(Fortune came to her when her head was white,)
What time dark leaves were weird in withering
boughs,
And each late rose sighed with its latest breath,
"This sweet world is too sweet to end in death."

But this is what my neighbour said to me :
"I grieved my youth away for that or this.
I had upon my hand the ring you see,
With pretty babies in my arms to kiss,
And one man said I had the sweetest eyes,
He was quite sure, this side of Paradise.

"But then our crowded cottage was so small,
And spacious grounds would blossom full insight;
Then one would fret me with an India shawl,
And one flash by me in a diamond's light ;
And one would show me wealth of precious lace,
And one look coldly from her painted face.

"I did not know that I had everything,
 Till—I remembered it. Ah me ! ah me !
 I who had ears to hear the wild-bird sing,
 And eyes to see the violets. . . . It must be
 A bitter fate that jewels the grey hair,
 Which once was golden and had flowers to wear.

"In the old house, in my old room, for years,
 The haunted cradle of my little ones gone
 Would hardly let me look at it for tears.
 . . . O my lost nurslings ! I stay on and on,
 Only to miss you from the empty light
 Of my low fire—with my own grave in sight.

"In the old house, too, in its own old place,
 Handsome and young, and looking towards the
 gate
 Through which it flushed to meet me, is a face
 For which, ah me ! I never more shall wait—
 For which, ah me ! I wait for ever, I
 Who for the hope of it, can surely die.

"Young men write gracious letters here to me,
 That ought to fill this mother-heart of mine.

The youth in this one crowds all Italy!

This glimmers with the far Pacific's shine.

The first poor little hand that warmed my breast
Wrote this—the date is old : you know the rest.

“Oh, if I only could have back my boys,

With their lost gloves and books for me to find,
Their scattered playthings and their pleasant noise!

. . . I sit here in the splendour growing blind,
With hollow hands that backward reach, and ache
For the sweet trouble which the children make.”

FRED'S MOTHER.

MASTER HARRY'S COMMENT.

"FRED says his mother cannot tell
One-half the things he asks her. Well !

"She doesn't even know how far
It is straight to that nearest star.

"She only knows the Golden Rule.
—I wonder where she went to school !"

A STRANGE COUNTRY.

It's a strange story I must tell
Of a strange country, Louis? Well,
The strangest country that I know
Is one where palm-trees do not grow;
It lies within the very reach

Of your two hands, and blue-birds flit
Among the flowers of pear and peach,
In pleasant dews, all over it.

In this strange country, then, last night,
A lady in the gracious light
Of garden-lamps and rising moon
(Hush! you may do your guessing soon),
With bits of stone she chose to wear,
That elfin queens, perhaps, had lost,
Outflashed the fire-flies in the air,—
And what a sum her party cost!

This morning, with a beard as white
As his own shroud should be, in sight
Of her high windows' precious lace,
A man—with, oh ! so sad a face
One scarce could look at it for tears—
 Stood with a staff, and slowly said :
“It's the first time in all these years ;
 But, Madam, I must ask for bread.”

The lady, lily-like, within
Her hands, that did not toil nor spin,
Held all sweet things this world can give ;
The man, for just the breath to live,
Early and late, in sun and snow,
 Had done his best. —I thought you knew !
 . . . It must be a strange country, though,
 Where such strange stories can be true.

A NEIGHBOURHOOD INCIDENT.

“ DID you know, Mamma, that the man was dead
In that pretty place, there under the hill ?”

“ So, with only the clouds to cover his head,
He died down there in that old stone mill ;
He died, in the wind and sleet, and—mark
This truth, fair sirs—in the dark.

“ (Yes, a pretty place !) In the summer-time,
When the birds sing out of the leaves for joy,
And the blue wild morning-glories climb
On the broken walls, it is pretty, my boy :
But not when the world around is snow
And the river is ice below.

“ Men looked sometimes from the morning cars
Toward the place where he lay in the winter sun,
And said, through the smoke of their dear cigars,
That something really ought to be done.
Then talked of the President, or the play,
Or the war—that was farthest away.”

“Do you know when his father wanted some bread,
One time, by the well there? Wasn't he old!
I mean that day when the blossoms were red
On the cliffs, and it wasn't so very cold”—
“And I gave him the little I well could spare
When I looked at his face and hair.

“Then we met him once—it was almost night—
Out looking for berries among the briers,
(So withered and weird, such a piteous sight!)
And gathering wood for their gypsy fires.
'No, the young man is no better. No, no,'
He would keep on saying, so low.”

“But the women there would not work, they say.”

“Why, that is the story; but, if it be true,
There are other women, I think, to-day
Who will not work, yet, their whole lives through,
All lovely things from the seas and lands
Drop into their idle hands.

“But these would not work, so their brother—and
ours—

Deserved to die in that desolate place?
Shall we send regrets and the usual flowers?
Shall we stop and see the upbraiding face,

As it lies in the roofless room forlorn,
For the sake of a dead man's scorn ?

“ He did his best, as none will deny,
At serving the Earth to pay for his breath ;
So she gave him early (and why not, why ?)
The one thing merciful men call Death.
Ah ! gift that must be gracious indeed,
Since it leaves us nothing to need !

“ . . . As for us, sweet friends, let us dress and
sleep,
Let us praise our pictures and drink our wine.
Meanwhile, let us drive His starving sheep
To our good Lord Christ, on the heights divine ;
For the flowerless valleys are dim and drear,
And the winds right bitter, down here.”

NORTH BEND, OHIO.

A GHOST AT THE OPERA.

[AFTER THE CIVIL WAR—IN KENTUCKY.]

It was, I think, the Lover of the play.

He, from stage-incantations, turned his head,
And one remembered motion shook away
The whole mock-fairy land, and raised the dead.

I, in an instant, saw the scenery change.

Trees grey with moss and time before me grew ;
Late roses shivered, beautiful and strange ;
One red geranium scented all the dew.

A sudden comet flung its golden veil

Around the frightened stars ; a sudden light
Stood, moon-shaped, in the East ; a sudden wail
From troubled music smote the spectral night.

Then blue, sweet shadows fell from flower-like eyes,
And purplish darkness drooped on careless hair,
And lips most lovely——oh, what empty sighs
Breathed to the air for something less than air !

I might have touched that fair and real ghost,
He laughed so lightly, looked so bright and brave,
So all unlike that thin and wavering host
Who walk unquiet from the quiet grave.

Myself another ghost, as vain and young,
And nearer Heaven than now by years and years,
My heart like some quick bird of morning sung
On fluttering wings above all dust and tears.

But some great lightning made a long red glare.
Black-plumed and brigand-like I saw him stand—
What ghastly sights, what noises in the air !
How sharp the sword seemed in his fevered hand !

He looked at me across the fiery field ;
The South was in his blood, his soul, his face.
Imperious despair, too lost to yield ;
Gave a quick glory to a desperate grace.

I saw him fall. I saw the deadly stain

Upon his breast—he cared not what was won.
The ghost was in the land of ghosts again.

The curtain fell, the phantom play was done.

TWO VISIONS OF FAIRYLAND.

ONE with her blue, faint eyes could dream too much;
One, rosily sun-stained, wanted things to touch.

She met him on the stair with half a blush :
“How late you sleep!” he said. She whispered
“Hush ;

“I read that painted book last night, and so
I dreamed about Prince Charming”—— “Did you,
though ?

“Why, I was wide awake in time to see
All Fairyland ! I wish you ’d been with me.”

“What was it like ?” “Oh, it was green and still,
With rocks and wild red roses and a hill,

“And some shy birds that sang far up the air—
And such a river, all in mist, was there.”

“Where was it?” Why the moon went down on one Side, and upon the other rose the sun!”

“How does one get there?” “Oh, the path lies through

The dawn, you little sleeper, and the dew.”

THE ONE OF TWO.

“LOVE him more,” they said to me,
“Since you need not love the other ;
He is sweet as sweet can be !”
And—they took away his brother.

“Only give him back his place.”
Brown head nestling near and nearer,
Little laughing two-years’ face,
You are dear—if *he* is dearer !

“Let him sleep ? He cannot care ?
Love is only for the living ?”—
Still this breathing child’s own share
To the dead one I am giving.

A COIN OF LESBOS.

I THINK how long she held it with a smile
 (Her jealous lyre complaining on her breast),
Dust thick on everything !—and she, the while,
 Forgetting it and Phaon and the rest !

With those great eyes, that had not longed as yet
 To lose their tears in kindred brine, ah me !
Fixed on its precious glimmer : “It will get——
 What will it get ?” she murmured : “Let me see.

“Some jewel that will more become my head
 Than withering leaves of laurel ? Nay, not so.
At least, I think, some lovelier robe,” she said,
 “Than any woman weareth that I know !”

So, years ere that deep glass wherein she gazed
With her last look had flashed it to the sun,
So mused, I fancy, the most overpraised
Of women who have sung on earth—save one?

TWO BABIES IN BED.

[LITTLE GUY'S ANSWER.]

"THINK of the baby at home," I said ;
 " How pretty he is to kiss.
It is white and warm in his little bed,
 It is dark and cold in this."

He laughed and said, with his hand in the dew
 Of the sweet small grave close by,
Where the grass of the loneliest summer grew :
 "*This* Baby does not cry."

“IT IS NOT YESTERDAY.”

[THE ANSWER OF A CHILD.]

POOR red flower of a mouth, you quiver so ;—
What is the matter ? Tell me—if you know.
Why don't you laugh out in your own one way ?
“Because—because it is not yesterday.”

I know, I know. Oh, yesterday was sweet.
It laid its one blue blossom at your feet.
It let you see that gracious old man pass,
Leading his cow to find the glad first grass.

To-day is dark, dark, dark. Somewhere I see
Quick lightning, and the sleet is on the tree
Where the bird, fluttering, thought about a nest.
And so you cry. Well, sometimes tears are best.

I do not know but I could hide my face
Deep in my arm, if I but had your grace,
And shed more tears than you can count, I say,
Because—ah me, it is not yesterday !

REQUIESCAT.

LIE still. You need not love nor gold
Nor name, to make the sum complete.
The world no living hand may hold
Falls at a dead man's feet.

Lie still. You climbed for flowers, and found
They grow not well in highest air.
Lie still : the rock, the thorn, the wound
Were yours ;—you had your share.

Lie still. This is the end, they say.
Lie still. The peasant and the king,
A little weary, walk this way ;
The bride leaves here her ring.

Your virtues ? Though the priest speak true,
You need not blush—your face is hid.
The roses life denied to you
Are on your coffin lid.

THE STORY OF A SHAWL.

[1879.]

My child, is it so strange, indeed,
This tale of the Plague in the East, you read?—

This tale of how a soldier found
A gleaming shawl of silk, close-wound,
(And stained, perhaps, with two-fold red)
About a dead man's careless head?

He took the treasure on his breast
To one he loved. We know the rest.

If Russia shudders near and far,
From peasant's hut to throne of Czar:

If Germany bids an armed guard
By sun and moon keep watch and ward

Along her line, that they who fly
From death, ah me ! shall surely die :

This trouble for the world was all
Wrapped in that soldier's sweetheart's shawl.

——Pray God no other lovers bring
Some gift as dread in rose or ring.

THE FIRST RED-BIRD.

[AFTER THE BIRD-FAMINE OF 1880.]

Look at him there !—that lonesome tree might break
Quick into bees and blossoms for his sake.

Through this long time of frost and fire, you see,
Safe in the hollow of God's hand was he.

He has not faded in the awful snows ;—
His plumes are redder than the wild red rose.

Yet what I read to you was true. Alack !
If he remember it, he might wear black.

Yes, all I read you. Oh, the piteous words
That sobbed the story of the last-year's birds !

The birds, the sweetest of all things called sweet,
Starved in dim places, beaten off by sleet.

Down from the boughs close to the ground they fell ;
Down from the heights of chasm and cloud as well.

Yet oh, too light of heart, too light of wings,
Here, at the promise of the leaf, he sings !

Ah, Red-Bird, hush, and wait you within call,
Till for your dead a tear or two can fall.

No. After all, you do a wiser thing,—
Sing for the rest, who never more can sing.

AT THE GRAVE OF A SUICIDE.

YOU sat in judgment on him, you whose feet
Were set in pleasant places, you who found
The Bitter Cup he dared to break still sweet,
And shut him from your consecrated ground.

Yet, if you think the dead man sleeps a whit
Less soundly in his grave, come look, I pray.
A violet has consecrated it.
Henceforth you need not fear to walk this way.

“STOP THE CLOCK.”

LET this red flower here on the cliff stay red ;
Let that glad bird sing always in the tree ;
Let baby keep this pretty yellow head
And these two dimples,—do you say to me ?

Let these same clouds make this same sky all gold ;
Let these same strawberries last ? (You ’ll tell me
how ?)
Let ’s take the world up in our arms and hold
It where it is, and make forever now ?

Let ’s sit here always in this wind and sun,
And hear the water dripping from the rock ?
Come, then, and tell me how it can be done.
——What, ho, within there ! Some one stop
the clock !

THE FAIRY'S GIFT.

A STORY TOLD TO A LITTLE BOY.

ABOVE his cradle such a glimmer of green
As might be worn in May by elfin folk
His mother in the dew had sometimes seen,
And in her heart she knew their threshold oak
Held some leaf-coloured eerie hood and cloak.

For once, when in a wood at dusk she found
And cared with tears for the forlornest bird,
That sang the sweeter through the huntsman's wound,
A promise made of music she had heard—
Too fine to trust to any mortal word.

But through the window of a dream, alack !
Her brooding secret flew at last ; and when
Could any woman call a secret back ?
Her peasant husband lordliest of men
Grew, as he whispered the weird story, then.

He talked of days when under his own vine
 (The fig-tree did not grow in that North land)
He should sit down and drink a baron's wine,
 Or climb his feudal stairs, you understand,
 With gold to scatter from his gracious hand.

Meanwhile he folded his strong arms and swore
 The earth might all run wild, he did not care ;
For he had seen, just three times and no more,
 Under the moon, around his baby's hair
 A coil of gold such as a king might wear

And the young Princess Beautiful (even she,
 The one you know !) would certainly come down
From her dim palace, in the time to be,
 And kindly offer him her father's crown ;
 Spite of that aged man's imperial frown.

So year by year, as blacker grew the bread,
 The growing boy seemed stronger, I confess ;
Though with what fare the gentle child was fed
 The wisest of the people could not guess.
 (Did honey-dews drop in that wilderness ?)

Oh, much the women wondered that they found
So little beauty in his brown, shy face.
How should a head like his be ever crowned
When there were brighter almost any place?
(True, he was half a bird in voice and grace.)

Yet if he only touched the wildest rose
The blossom seemed enchanted by his hand.
... And still the Princess came not. I suppose
She feared her greybeard father, whose command
Had bound the wrong ring on her hapless hand.

But once in a rude chapel there had been
A wedding. He was not the groom that day.
The loveliest maiden that was ever seen
Lifted her eyes, and as he looked away
His face flushed like a flower, the old people say.

What did he do? As years and years went by
He tended sheep for some small insolent lord
(And loved the lambs), until there went a cry
That said: "There is no help—take up the sword."
Was he a General, too? No, on my word!

And in the fight, with his last breath he sent
The water that his mouth had burned for so
Unto another soldier. Oh, I meant
Sir Philip Sidney ? But I did not, though :—
I meant a greater with no name, you know.

The people murmured after he was dead,
Saying, " He helped us. Did the Fairy, then,
Forget to help *him* ?" But a faint voice said,
Out of his mother's lips, " I say again,
Never did Fairy break an oath to men.

" The sweetest gift she promised him—and, oh !
The sweetest gift she gave him upon earth.
Could this be gold or glory ? Surely, no ;
Your king could tell you what these things are
worth,
Shivering to-night beside his lonesome hearth."

What can it be, then, if it was not gold,
Nor pearl, nor anything,—you ask of me ?
The sweetest thing on earth you cannot hold
Out in your hand for all the world to see.
He hid it in his heart. What could it be ?

TO-MORROW.

KEEP lovely in that painted scene
There where false water quivers bright,
There where false-fruited trees are green,
Far from the sharp dawn's dreary light,
Our dear illusion of To-night !

Only with lamps between we meet,
With silence in your steps you stay :
A player, seeming young and sweet,
That have to play a bitter play—
Near, yet forever far away.

You, in your borrowed hair's soft gloom ;
You, in your mask of white and red ;
You, in mock jewels—bud and bloom,
Torn from To-day, with odours dead,
Will stain the shining stage you tread !

We tremble as we feel you start,
So dimly glittering toward our eyes,
For this dark drama, this fierce part,
Where coffins, blood, and tearful cries
Must pass you in your pageantries.

Ah ! lovely in that painted scene,
There where false water quivers bright,
There where false-fruited trees are green,
Far from the sharp dawn's dreary light,
Stay, dear illusion of To-night !

THE NIGHT COMETH.

FOLD up the work wherein, hour after hour,
 (Only to sew my shroud, then, was I born ?)
I've wrought faint pictures, look, of many a flower
 And many a thorn.

Yea, many a flower. Some bridal blossoms ; some
 Spell my dead children's names in their sweet way ;
One blew in Eden ere the Snake had come ;—
 And these are they.

Yea, many a thorn. Behold, my hand hath bled
 Even in tracing them, so sharp were they,
On this long shivering garment.—Did His head
 Wear such, that day ?

I can but think me how, before the dew
 Melted in sunrise, and when noon was hot,
Till on the dusk my coffin's shadow grew,
 I rested not,—

Working forever on this one white thing !

Why, of a truth, it should be fair to see
And sweet to sleep in. Love, you need not bring
Your lamp to me.

Look you,—the graveyard moon ariseth. So,—

That light is for the blind. Now let me be.
Listen !—the graveyard wind. There ! I will go.
It calleth me.

THE SULTAN'S CONFESSION.

THE richest Sultan of the East once said,
And stooped, to hide his blush, his turbaned head :

“Yes, I am great. Behold, I can command
Armies of slaves through all my flowering land.

“But I could not command the worm, so small
None sees, that ate the dead Sultana's shawl.

“She, sweetest of the sweet, who left these eyes
For ever dark, to lighten Paradise,—

“The folds that touched her lovely form to me
Were more than all my jewelled treasury.”

THE NIGHT-MOTH'S COMMENT.

[ALIGHTED UPON A YELLOW AUTOGRAPH LETTER OF
CHESTERFIELD.]

HERE is a gracious letter that one writ
Who thought this rugged world of lands and seas,
Among whose suns and rains we shadows flit—
In sorrow and in mystery, if you please—
A place to be polite and take one's ease.

My lord, above your old, dead courtesy,
Out of the light of stars, in lovelier light,
All summer-green and glad, this moth to me
Seems Nature's comment, clear and brief and
bright,
On man's poor dusty vanity, to-night.

A RAINY DAY.

[FOR A LITTLE BOY.]

Do ? Like the things in the garden. Oh,
Just keep quiet awhile and grow.

Do ? Like the bird. It shuts its wings
And waits for the sun ? Do you hear ?—it sings !

Do ? Like the lilies. Let it beat ;
Nestle below it and be sweet.

LET US GO TO FAIRYLAND.

LET us go to Fairyland
From the rain and from the snow.
Somewhere in the enchanted sand
May be footsteps we should know.
Come, I prithee, let us go.

Yes, the child we loved was fair.
But too fragile was his hand.
But too golden was his hair.
He has gone to Fairyland ;—
Looking thither need we stand ?

THE FLIGHT OF THE CHILDREN,
ETC.



THE FLIGHT OF THE CHILDREN.

THEY fade to fairies, fade and pass
 Into the dimness of the dew,
Into the greenness of the grass,
 Among the blossoms glad and new ;
They wander off into the wind,
And leave me, dreaming, far behind.

Then some great greyness round me steals ;
 My hollow hands I faintly fold ;
The awful touch of blindness seals
 My glimmering eyes, and I am old—
So old I care not for my years,
So old that I have done with tears.

. . . Soon little faces, flushed and fair,
 As other faces used to be,
Climb, full of wonder, up my chair,
 And whisper, while they look at me ;—

Till, suddenly, some timid tongue
Asks me if I were ever young.

Then, wild and beautiful like a bird,
Upon my shoulders youth alights ;
Old music from its sleep is heard ;
I linger in diviner nights ;
A lonesome crescent cuts the sky ;
Weird, windy shadows waver by.

One lily, yellow-withered, dead,
Reblooms and shakes old sweetness out ;
One rose, from pages long unread,
Breathes its lost breath of love about ;
From half-a-century of dust
One slighted hand is wanly thrust.

. . . Then my fair, dreary dream will pass—
No longer young nor old am I ;
My fairies leave the dew and grass,
Out of the wind my fairies fly ;—
My own sweet children sweetly say :
“You cry sometimes—when we’re away !”

TRANSFIGURED.

ALMOST afraid they led her in
 (A dwarf more piteous none could find) ;
Withered as some weird leaf, and thin,
 The woman was—and wan and blind.

Into his mirror with a smile—
 Not vain to be so fair, but glad—
The South-born painter looked the while,
 With eyes than Christ's alone less sad.

“Mother of God,” in pale surprise
 He whispered, “What am I to paint !”
A voice, that sounded from the skies,
 Said to him : “Raphael, a saint.”

She sat before him in the sun :
 He scarce could look at her, and she
Was still and silent. . . . “It is done,”
 He said,—“Oh, call the world to see !”

Ah, this was she in veriest truth—
Transcendant face and haloed hair.
The beauty of divinest youth,
Divinely beautiful, was there.

Herself into her picture passed—
Herself and not her poor disguise,
Made up of time and dust. . . . At last
One saw her with the Master's eyes.

THAT NEW WORLD.

How gracious we are to grant to the dead
Those wide, vague lands in the foreign sky,
Reserving this world for ourselves instead—
For we must live, though others must die!

And what is this world that we keep, I pray?
True, it has glimpses of dews and flowers;
Then Youth and Love are here and away,
Like mated birds—but nothing is ours.

Ah, nothing indeed, but we cling to it all.
It is nothing to hear one's own heart beat,
It is nothing to see one's own tears fall;
Yet surely the breath of our life is sweet.

Yes, the breath of our life is so sweet, I fear
We were loth to give it for all we know
Of that charmed Country we hold so dear,
Far into whose beauty the breathless go.

Yet certain we are, when we see them fade
Out of the pleasant light of the sun,
Of the sands of gold in the palm-leaf's shade,
And the strange, high jewels all these have
won.

You dare not doubt it, O soul of mine !
And yet, if these empty eyes could see
One, only one, from that voyage divine,
With something, anything, sure for me !

Ah, blow me the scent of one lily, to tell
That it grew outside of this world, at most ;
Ah, show me a plume to touch, or a shell
That whispers of some unearthly coast !

LADY FRANKLIN.

[ON HER DEATH, 1875.]

IN shadowy ships, that freeze,
We think of men who sail, the frozen-fated ;
Tears, if you will, for these.
But oh, the truest searcher of the seas
In the blown breath of English daisies waited.

A pathway, here or there,
He sought — the old, unlighted Pathway
finding :
Out of the North's despair,
Out of the South's flower-burdened wastes of air,
To that great Peaceful Sea forever winding.

Oh, after *her* vague quest
Among weird winds, in icy deserts, lonely,
Has she laid down to rest
Under a Palm, whose light leaves on her breast
Drop balms of summer, sun and silence only ?

IN HER PRISON.

WATCHED with the cruel watching of the stars,
Barred by the powers of darkness with their bars :

Oh ! those that see me see as far as space,
And these that hold me circle every place.

My feet are tangled in the chains of Time,
My hands cannot take hold on air and climb.

And I am dumb—because the heavens are high,
And who can hope to scale them with a cry ?

The floor is grey with mould on which I tread,
Dust gathers in the silence overhead.

With bitter bread and water hardly sweet
My jailer mocks me, saying : “Drink and eat.”

Yet somewhere there are carpets soft and rare,
And lights and laughter in the world—somewhere ?

And somewhere there are golden cups of wine,
And snowy cakes where combs of honey shine.

Through other lips I taste the wine, and touch
Through other feet the carpets—that is much.

I see through other eyes the lights, and hear
The laughter clearly, not with mine own ear.

My grating gathers me a drop of dew ;
Some piteous blossom sends its sweetness through.

Some tender bird, far on a sunny tree,
Breaks his wild song and gives one half to me.

The palace music leaves the palace guest,
And falls to dreaming here upon my breast.

Yet, spite of all, sometimes my Prison shakes
With the great yearning of a heart that aches.

Oh ! that its lonesome roof would fall to-night,
And show me for an instant—something White !

A QUEEN AT HOME.

THEY know that the world is mine
 (I am but a name to them,)
And they fancy its jewels shine
 All over my garment's hem.

My face seems bright from afar
 To their loyal eyes and trust :
But who looks too close at a star
 Will find it is made of dust.

My friend, you have whiter bread ;
 My friend, you have redder wine,
And a fairer roof for your head,
 Though beggar you be, than mine.

To the poor I give of my gold ;
 By the wounded I watch at night ;
To the eyes of the dying I hold
 A cross—not mine own—for a light.

Yes, the world is mine, but I pray
On my cloister floor alone ;
My hood and my cloak are grey,
And my pillow is but a stone.

ANSWERING A CHILD.

BUT if I should ask the king ?—

He could if he would ? Ah, no.

Though he took from his hand the ring,

Though he took from his head the crown—

In the dust I should lay them down.

If I sat at a fairy's feet ?—

A fairy could if she would ?

(Oh, the fairy-faith is sweet !)

Though she gave me her wand and her wings,

To me they were pitiful things.

Ask God ?—He can if He will ?—

He is better than fairies or kings ?

(Ask God ?—He would whisper : "Be still.")

Though He gave me each star I can see

Through my tears—it were nothing to me.

“He can do”—— But He cannot undo
The terrible darkened gate
Which the fire of His will went through,
Leading the Dead away. . . .
For the Past it is vain to pray !

NO HELP.

WHEN will the flowers grow there ? I cannot tell.

Oh, many and many a rain will beat there first,
Stormy and dreary, such as never fell

Save when the heart was breaking that had
nursed

Something most dear a little while, and then
Murmured at giving God his own again.

The woods were full of violets, I know ;

And some wild sweet-briers grew so near the
place :

Their time is not yet come. Dead leaves and snow

Must cover first the darling little face
From these wet eyes, forever fixed upon
Your last still cradle, O most precious one !

Is he not with his Father ? So I trust.

Is he not His ? Was he not also mine ?

His mother's empty arms yearn toward the dust.

Heaven lies too high, the soul is too divine.

I wake at night and miss him from my breast,
And—human words can never say the rest.

Safe ? But out of the world, out of my sight !

My way to him through utter darkness lies.
I am gone blind with weeping, and the light—

If there be light—is shut inside the skies.
Think you, to give my bosom back his breath,
I would not kiss him from the peace called Death ?

And do I want a little Angel ? No,

I want my baby—with such piteous pain,
That were this bitter life thrice bitter, oh !

I could not choose but take him back again.
God cannot help me, for God cannot break
His own dark Law—for my poor sorrow's sake.

GIVING UP THE WORLD.

So, from the ruins of the world alone
Can Heaven be builded ? Oh,
What other temples must be overthrown,
Founded in sand or snow !

But, Heaven can not be built with jewelled hands ?
Then—from my own I wring
Glitter of gold, the gifts of many lands ;
The seas their pearls I fling.

Heaven must be hung with pictures of the dead ?
The shroud must robe the saint ?
Never one halo round a living head
Would Raphael dare to paint ?

Heaven must have flowers—after the worm has
crossed
Their blush, the wind their breath ?
After the utter silence of the frost
Has made them white with death ?

Heaven must have music—but the birds that sing
In that divinest nest
Thither must waver, wounded in the wing
And wounded in the breast ?

Heaven must be lighted—at the fallen light
Of moon, and star, and sun ?
Ah me ! since these have made the earth too bright,
Let the dark Will be done !

SAD WISDOM: FOUR YEARS OLD.

“WELL, but some time I will be dead;
Then you will love me, too!”
Ah! mouth so wise for mouth so red,
I wonder how you knew.
(Closer, closer, little brown head—
Not long can I keep you!)

Here, take this one poor bud to hold,
Take this long kiss and last;
Love cannot loosen one fixed fold
Of the shroud that holds you fast—
Never, never; oh, cold, so cold!
All that was sweet is past.

Oh, tears, and tears, and foolish tears,
Dropped on a grave somewhere! . . .
Does not the child laugh in my ears
What time I feign despair?

Whisper, whisper—I know he hears ;
Yet this is hard to bear.

O world, with your wet face above
One veil of dust, thick-drawn !
O weird voice of the hapless dove,
Broken for something gone !—
Tell me, tell me, when will we love
The thing the sun shines on ?

THE QUEEN OF SPAIN.¹

AH, then she was a bride, a king's bride, too
 (With crimson velvet mantles lit with gold),
And beautiful? Those fairy-tales are true
 That end in sorrow, somewhere we are told.
And so you envied her? Tell me, I pray,
How fares the Queen of Spain to-day?

Oh, now you only pity her? I see.
 Almost with tears you pity her—and why?
Death is the saddest thing of all—and she
 Is dead? Therefore—she will not have to die
Nor have to live, for life itself may prove
Not quite too sweet, for all of love.

You envied her what time the priest who bent
 To bless the bridal might have seen in air
His own ghost holding the Last Sacrament
 To her loth lips, and weirdly waiting there.

¹ Mercedes, who died in 1878.

They hunger not who taste that pleasant bread.
Poor child, what is it to be dead ?

Oh, some who envied not her pearls and trains,
Her Spanish lover and her Spanish crown,
Do envy her the one thing that remains
To those who keep their hollow hands shut down ;
For whether that one thing in truth be rest,
Or Paradise, it is the best.

TWO AND TWO.

A BROWN head and a golden head
Above the violets keep in sight ;
Dark eyes and blue (with tears to shed)
Look laughing toward me in the light.
A red-bird flashes from the tree :
"The world is glad, is glad !" sings he.

A golden head, a head of brown,
Below the violets, miss the sun ;
Dark eyes and blue—their lids shut down—
With tears (and theirs were brief) have done.
A dove hides in another tree :
"The world is sad, is sad !" grieves she.

Through song and moan, I hardly know,
Between the red-bird and the dove,
If most I'd wish that two below
The violets were with two above,
Or two above the violets lay
With two below them deep, to-day.

IN A QUEEN'S DOMAIN.

AH, my subject, the rose, I know,
Will give me her breath and her blush ;
And my subject, the lily, spread snow,
If I pass, for my foot to crush.

My subjects, the lamb and the fawn,
They hide their heads in my breast ;
And my subject, the dove, coos on,
Though my hand creep close to her nest.

But my subject, the bee, will sting ;
And my subject, the thorn, will tear ;
And my subject, the tiger, will spring
At me, with a cry and a glare.

And my subject, the lion, will shake
With his anger my loneliest lands ;
And my subject, the snake (ah ! the snake !)
Will strike me dead in the sands !

HER WELL-KNOWN STORY.

SHE had waited,
On her soft cheek catching many a winter's snow.
Very lovely was the heart unmated ;
Beauty far too beautiful to show,
When her dewy days had withered,
Bloomed below.

Children, brightly,
Near her Christmas windows held their toys and
passed ;
Mothers kissed their laughing babies lightly ;
Heads of girls went, sunny-sweet and fast,
Under gifts of bridal blossoms ;
Then, at last,

One green morning,
When small songs were shaking many a pretty nest,
On her birthday, without any warning,
Came her life-long Lover to her breast,
Bringing white flowers and a casket
Full of rest.

BEATRICE CENCI.

[SEEN IN A CITY SHOP-WINDOW.]

OUT of low light an exquisite faint face
Suddenly started. Goldenness of hair,
A South-look of sweet-sorrowful eyes, a trace
Of prison-paleness : what if these were there,
When Guido's hand could never reach the grace
That glimmered on me from the Italian air—
Fairness so fierce, or fierceness half so fair ?

“Is it some Actress ?” a slight school-boy said.
Some Actress ? Yes.

——The curtain rolled away,
Dusty and dim. The scene—among the dead—
In some weird, gloomy-pillared palace lay ;
The Tragedy, which we have brokenly read,
With its two hundred ghastly years was grey :
None dared applaud with flowers her shadowy
way—
Yet, ah ! how bitterly well she seemed to play !

Hush ! for a child's quick murmur breaks the charm
Of terror that was winding round me so ;
And, at the white touch of her pretty arm,
Darkness and Death and Agony crouch low
In old-time dungeons : "Tell me, (is it harm
To ask you ?) is the picture real, though ?—
And why the beautiful ladies, all, you know,
Live so far-off, and die so long ago ?"

LEAVING LOVE.

If one should stay in Italy a while,
With bloom to hide the dust beneath her feet,
With birds in love with roses to beguile
Her life until its sadness grew too sweet ;

If she should, slowly, see some statue there,
Divine with whiteness and with coldness, keep
A very halo in the hovering air ;
If she should weep—because it could not weep ;

If she should waste each early gift of grace
In watching it with rapturous despair,
Should kiss her youth out on its stony face,
And feel the greyness gathering toward her hair :

Then fancy, though it had till now seemed blind,
Blind to her little fairness, it could see
How scarred of soul, how wan and worn of mind,
How faint of form and faded, she must be ;

If she should moan : “ Ah, land of flower and fruit,
Ah, fiercely languid land, undo your charm !
Ah, song impassioned, make your music mute !
Ah, bosom, shake away my clinging arm ! ”

Then swiftly climb into the mountains near,
And set her face forever toward the snow,
And feel the North in chasm and cliff, and hear
No echo from the fairyland below ;

If she should feel her own new loneliness,
With every deep-marked, freezing step she trod,
Nearing (and in its nearness growing less)
The vast and utter loneliness of God ;

If back to scented valleys she should call,
This woman that I fancy—only she—
Would it remind one statue there at all,
O cruel Silence in the South, of—me ?

TWO VOICES.

[EAGER CHILD AND TOO BUSY MOTHER.]

“One bird is come. It’s blue. But there is not
any other

In this whole world anywhere, and it will soon be
gone.

Will you listen?” “I must hush your pretty,
crying brother.

Tell it—to sing on.”

“Here’s one rose, the first of all. But the wind
may blow and take it,

Or the frost may come again as cold as frost
can be,

Or a bee that hunts for honey may light on the
leaves, and break it.—

Will you come and see?”

“Look on the floor, my boy, and think of my distresses :

Aladdin's Lamp (upset) and Blue Beard's dreadful key,
The Sleeping Beauty's coverlet and Cinderella's dresses,
Full of dust—ah, me !”

“Now a star is out. It's gold. But I tell you it will never

Look so shining any more where the water is so deep.”

“Oh, the star will stay, I fancy, somewhere in the sky forever ;

I—must go to sleep.

. . . “It will stay. But I shall stay not. Why was I sent hither,

Fair brief world, if I must leave you, having seen nor heard

(Resting in your grass an instant on my secret mission—whither?)

Star, nor bloom, nor bird ?

"I *would* help you find the fairies (for the *moon* can
shine on pleasure),

I would hear the bird a-singing, I would see the
rose was red,

If I only had a little of the long, long leisure

I shall have—when dead."

ONE OUT-OF-DOORS.

A GHOST—is he afraid to be a ghost ?

A ghost ? It breaks my heart to think of it.
Something that wavers in the moon, at most ;

Something that wanders ; something that must flit
From morning, from the bird's breath and the dew.
Ah, if I knew,—ah, if I only knew !

Something so weirdly wan, so weirdly still !

O yearning lips that our warm blood can flush,
Follow it with your kisses, if you will ;

O beating heart, think of its helpless hush.
Oh, bitterest of all, to fear we fear
Something that was so near, that was so dear !

No,—no, he is no ghost ; he could not be ;

Something that hides, forlorn, in frost and brier ;
Something shut outside in the dark, while we

Laugh and forget by the familiar fire ;
Something whose moan we call the wind, whose tears
Sound but as rain-drops in our human ears.

A TRAGEDY IN WESTERN WOODS.

[WOMAN SPEAKS.]

WHY, we are willing, friend, to end with death ;
Death to begin with is another thing.
Too bitter is it not to keep our breath
Until its best from this brave world we wring.

Confronting dew and briar-rose, pitiless sun,
And bird that sang not knowing, on her breast
A bud unwithered, damp with blood, lay one
Who dreamed of life, perhaps—and knew the
rest.

The girl's shy lover, through weird-whispering
trees
Walked eagerly, perhaps an instant late :
(That day of all days, feverish to please !)—
He started, stared, and fell against the gate.

Blossom and blush he came to find. He found
Only the dead—who left an empty earth.
—— But, sir, a ploughman's heart can hold a
wound
As deep as if he cared for books or birth.

With tears unfallen, from out the murmurous
crowd

A woman trembled, who was sad and grey.
Lifting the maid, she dressed her in her shroud,
And watched her in a long, still, wordless way.

“That boy?” one moaned; “why, that could
never be.”

Another said: “He owns what he has done.”
She was a widow. As they muttered she
Looked from the door—and saw her only son!

. . . Ah, baby laugh and dimple, baby kiss
And wandering baby hands, that take one's
heart
To play with—or let drop and break! Was
this
The end, poor mother, of a mother's part?

We cry for help. God has the heavens to hold.
Can He let fall the stars, to take us up
And comfort us? He lets our lips grow cold—
And that is much—after we drink the cup.

And she who saw men lead away that youth
(The childish gold scarce blown from off his
hair,
More evil for his beauty's sake) in truth
Saw no more sorrow, surely, anywhere!

If light come ever to the void in eyes
That, having seen such woe, shut, and are
sealed,
It is the utter light of Paradise,
Whereby no thing not fair shall be revealed.

HIS FAIRY GODMOTHER.

[MADAM CINDERELLA SPEAKS.]

Who felt the quaint light subtly shining in ?—
Who heard that other wind within the wind ?
Who saw the Little Lady, wild and thin,
Pale with the spirits and the spells behind ?

I see her now ; I take this withered wand,
A weird Egyptian lily, when I choose,
And wave her to and fro, and back beyond
That lonesome moonshine and those charmed
dews.

I see her now—if I but shut my eyes—
Dressed in the frosty green of leaves half-
dead :
Ah, still witch-smile ; ah, old and wise replies
To all the precious words—you never said !

How queer you both looked as she rose and
shook

Her ancient, shrunken, clinched hand in your
face,

Then laid her finger on your lip, and took

Beside you in the dance her sudden place !

You play the Prince. Princes grow grey like you.

'Tis the worn story slightly changed, in
truth :

Poor Cinderella never found her shoe ;

She is left out—a fable of your youth.

You have the citrons and the wine of life,

Its lights, its honours—what has it beside ?

Her Majesty, the Queen, your worthy wife,

Has plumes and pearls and garments purple-
dyed.

She, in a peasant's cottage, built low down,

Kisses gold heads and waits a twilight voice,

Nor envies you the palace and the crown,

But finds her own in your godmother's choice.

Still she finds time, in dreaming, evermore,
To wonder if, in flying sleep, you pass,
Handsome and young, sometimes, from your great
door,
To kiss and keep—a Slipper made of Glass !

A SISTER OF MERCY.

THERE, by the man condemned to die, she read
Christ's promise in the Crucifixion tale.

He moaned a name——

She dropped her cross and fled
From the long shadow of the veil !

And, as from her loosed convent coif she shook
Her youthful hair's free length of beauty, he
Threw from his face the scarred and sinful look,
And followed her across the sea !

There, in a Land of Distance vague with Spring,
She, fair as that one morning-bud she wore,
Held him her frightened hand to take—the ring
They found upon his prison floor !

“The ring was full of poison”—so they said ;

“ A Sister of Mercy left it at his side ! ”

The gathering crowd must know the wretch was
dead,

Nor blame his jailer that he died.

Perhaps their prisoner grey and ghastly lay ;

Perhaps the black-robed Sister, worn and bowed,
Who prayed there with that prisoner yesterday,
Was at St. Mary's in her shroud.

Yet, in some Land of Distance full of Spring,

Whither their Youth of Love had passed before,
He gave her hand—indeed the very ring
They found upon his prison floor !

HER SIMILE.

If you should see a statue, one
Whose marble name was Silence, sit alone,
Whiter than Death and sadder, in the sun,
With stony finger pressed to lips of stone ;

If from those lips, themselves so still,
A fountain's waters restlessly should start,
And make a little troubled murmur, till
They all were dry : this would be like my heart.

AN EAST-INDIAN FAIRY STORY.

[FROM "OLD DECCAN DAYS."]

ALL day she was yellow and grey and thin ;
All day she was troubled with time and
tears ;
All day she was dressed in the withered skin
Of a woman who lived a hundred years.

All day she begged, through the heavy heat,
For a drop of water, a grain of rice ;
But she sat, in the twilight, still and sweet,
Close to the leaves of the blossoming spice.

At a fairy fountain dim in the air,
In a garment white as a priestess wears,
With a lotus-bud in her lovely hair,
And her hand in the water, she said her
prayers.

“ Oh, well do I hide my beauty all day
From the sun and the cruel eyes I dread ;
But the gods can see me when I pray,
And I must look fair to the gods,” she said.

A CHAIN FROM VENICE.

SHE stretches dimpled arms of snow ;
A glad smile lights her baby eyes :
My little beauty, would you know
The story of your shining prize ?

It is a poet's golden thought
Of you, that glitters like your hair,
Of rich Venetian sunlight wrought
Far in the South's enchanted air.

Ah, if you stay from Heaven to learn
The years before you lying dim,
You'll think, my darling, in return,
A thought as beautiful of him.

EARLIER POEMS.



A DISENCHANTMENT.

OH, thou wast but a breathing May
Embodied by delicious dreams,
And drifted o'er my wandering way
On fancy's swift and shining streams.
Thine eyes were only violets,
Thy lips but buds of crimson bloom,
Thy hair, coiled sunshine—vain regrets !
Thy soul, a brief perfume.

So, when the time of mists and chills
Fell where the sweet wild roses grew,
And took them from the shadowy hills,
It took my lovely vision too ;
And when I came again to find
The charm which used to fill the air,
A sorrow struck me mute and blind—
Thou wast not anywhere !

Yet something met me in thy place,
 Something, they said, with looks like thine,
With tresses full of golden grace
 And lips flushed red with beauty's wine ;
With voice of silvery swells and falls
 And dreamy eyes still sweetly blue—
But, then, the reptile's nature crawls
 Beneath the rainbow's hue.

Woman, all things below, above,
 Look pale and drear and glimmering now,
For I have loved thee with a love
 Whose passionate deeps such things as thou
May never sound. And, with a moan,
 The chilled tide of that love has rolled
Above my heart, and made it stone,
 And oh, so cold, so cold !

I saw thee by a magic lamp
 Whose warm and gorgeous blaze is gone,
And o'er me shivers, grey and damp,
 The dimness of the real dawn.
Oh, I am like to one who stands
 Where late a vision smiled in air,
And murmurs, with outstretching hands,
 "Where is my Angel—where ?"

WAITING AT THE PARTY.

THE lamp-flowers wreath the walls below,
And drop their tremulous golden bloom
On gem and smile—and I must go
From this dim, lonesome room.

It is not long;—but oh, it seems,
Since those bright girls went down the stair
I've crossed a thousand years of dreams,
And landed everywhere.

In tropic palms I've caught strange birds
With summer painted on their plumes;
I've feigned the south wind's music-words
To woo his wild-rose blooms.

I've watched great mirage-buds break through
Their sand-leaves in red desert-noons;
And gathered pearly bells and blue
By pallid northern moons.

Yet most I've seen a lily-band
Of buried visions I should know
Rise from that misty fairy land
We call the Long Ago.

These wear death's snow-calms in their breasts,
Like great, white flowers—and linger near :
Oh, beautiful—oh pale, still guests !
Who did invite *you* here ?

. . . Once more I hear the music start
And murmur through its veil of light,
And the deep fountains of my heart
Are broken up to-night.

. . . But—you are waiting at the door,
With half a frown and half a smile,
Thinking, no doubt, I've stayed before
The mirror all this while.

And, as your delicate fingers twine
Unrestful through your curls of brown,
You lift your dark, cold eyes to mine,
And ask : "Shall we go down ?"

Yes, if you will. A funeral chime,
You say, is in my voice. 'Tis true.
What have I thought of all this time ?
Ah, sir, I have not thought of—you !

TO A DEAD BIRD,

FOUND IN THE WOODS AT EVENING.

BIRD of the forest, beautiful and dead !

While in the twilight here I look on thee,
Strange fancies, of the wild life that has fled,
Dimly and sadly gather over me,
Until, above thy calm and silent sleep,
I can but bow my aching head and weep.

Alas, that when the Spring-time's here to wake

The flowers and music of thy woodland halls,
Thou whose glad voice so sweet a strain could make
In concert with the winds and water-falls,
In cold and hushed oblivion shouldst lie—
While things that suffer ask, in vain, to die !

But, wast thou purely blest ? Ah, who can tell

But birds may have their sorrows ? It may be
That boundless love in thy small breast did dwell
For some bright, wingéd thing—that flew from thee

And left his scorn to pierce thy bleeding heart,
Till Death, in pity, drew away its dart.

Or thine, perchance, has been a perfect love,
 (If any love can be without a sting !)
And thy lone mate may come to mourn above
 Thy blighted beauty, with a drooping wing,
Till, like all lonely mates, he seek relief,
In some new rapture, for his transient grief.

Or thou mayst have been of a royal race ;
 And radiant throngs of minstrel-things to-day,
Even in thine airy realm's remotest place,
 May mourn, or joy, that thou hast passed away,—
For gold and purple glitter on thy breast,
And thou art laid right regally to rest.

Was thy death tranquil ?—Or, amid the glare
 Of Heaven's fierce fire-arms was thy being
 sped ?
Or did some winged assassin of the air,
 For hate, or envy, meet and strike thee dead ?
Was life still blushing with youth's rosy glow,
Or, worn and weary, wast thou glad to go ?

And was thy all of joy, or grief, on earth ?

Or art thou gone to try thy wing anew
Where lovelier roses have their happier birth,
And woods are ever green, skies ever blue,
And breezy music gushes rich and warm,
With not a sigh, or whisper of the storm ?

. . . Fit mausoleum is this hollow tree,
With faded leaves to pillow thy bright head ;
And, if such rest is all that's left for thee,
Methinks it is enough, sweet singer dead !
For winds will sing and buds will burst above,
And I'll believe they left thee here with love !

HER METAPHORS.

A FAIRY dream that stole,
With evanescent light,
Across thy wakened soul,
One early Autumn night—
Am I not this to thee ?

A lone and languid rose
That in thy care might bloom,
But on the distance throws,
Vainly, its vague perfume—
Am I not this to thee ?

A faint and trembling star
That drew thine eyes awhile,
Still shining on afar,
Deserted by thy smile—
Am I not this to thee ?

A pearl cast at thy feet
And worn by thee an hour,
Then left where fierce waves beat,
The plaything of their power—
Am I not this to thee ?

A half remembered strain,
That once could charm thine ear,
Whose music thou again
Wilt sometimes sigh to hear—
Am I not this to thee ?

AND a something of Eden is everywhere ?

It smiles in the sun, it sings in the sea ;

But the convent-gates of a stony despair

Are shutting the beautiful world from me.

And they tell me that Love is filling with light

The void which he left in my bosom's deep,—

But we do not see that the morning is bright

When it takes the angels away from sleep.

IN THE GRAVEYARD.

THE sweetness dropped from the cherry-blooms
Over the sleep that is never stirred,
And the twilight drooped on her purple plumes,
And fluttered and moaned, like a dying bird,
Till I hid my face in the scented glooms.

The grasses were damp where the thorns had
grown ;

The bats flew close to the mouldering staves ;
Some wild, white buds, with a windy moan,
Fell with their faces against the graves,
And the moss-veils hung on the broken stone.

Out of the dim and dusky sky
A golden blossoming broke ere long,
And glittered and fell on the spring-woods nigh,
Where a dove was hushing her sleepy song ;
And we were together, the dead and I.

“The heart above, with its breaking strings,
Wails dissonant music, stormy or slow ;
But ah ! what a beautiful stillness clings,
Sweet Death,” I said “to the hearts below,
That are touched with the calm of your pallid
wings.

“But is memory still where the vanished go ?”
Then I thought of a tender dream of the past,
That faded and fell in a passionate woe,
Like a lotus-flower in a poisoned blast ;
And I stared in the shadow and said, “You know.

“Come out of your silence once more, and seem
The thing that I loved in the years afar,
While the wild-bird flutters and sings in its dream,
And the yellow bloom of the evening star
Drops, as of old, in the whispering stream.”

You came, and I saw the tremulous breeze
Blow the loose brown hair about your head ;
You came, through a murmur of melodies ;
You came, for love can awaken the dead ;
You came, and stood by the cherry-trees.

You came, and your white hand was not cold,
And your quiet eyes they were not dim ;
And we watched the moon-rise dripping with gold,
While the waters chanted a vesper hymn,
And your lip was flushed with the tales it told.

I could see the wings of the sun's pet-birds,
I could hear the delicate sigh of the shells,
And the giant cry of the seas in your words ;
Yet others had heard but the distant bells,
And seen but the glimmer of rocks and herds.

I whispered like one that is not awake :
"Does sorrow die with our dying breath ?
Did it drop from your life like a wounded snake,
When the dust of your beauty was touched with
death ?
Oh, tell me,—oh, tell me, for love's sweet sake.

"Say, is memory still where the vanished go ?
Say, Presence out of the spicy zones—
Let your sweet lips whisper the secret low,
While I wait by the mosses and broken stones :
Ah, you hide in your silence, and yet you know."

HOME AGAIN.

It is a mournful thing to have no home,
To wear a shroud of loneliness on earth,
To know that fate has forced thee forth to roam,
And fear thyself unwelcome by each hearth,—
To hear harsh, stranger voices, and to raise
A drooping lid and meet a loveless gaze !

Once, long ago, the lightning's quivering glare
Lit the strange sadness of a boyish face,
And vanished from bright waves of tangled hair
That seemed to touch the dark with sunny grace,
While the sad wind with many a fond caress
Sighed for a kindred wanderer's loneliness.

Weary and wretched he had sunk to sleep
Ere sunset's crimson loveliness was gone ;
The twilight came and passed, night's gloom grew
deep
In the damp forest ; still he slumbered on,

And—oh ! how strange !—that friendless wanderer
smiled
As calmly as a cradled, thoughtless child.

For Memory bore him to his home ; he heard
The murmured music of his childish hours ;
He saw familiar trees and each bright bird
Whose sweet song gushed at Spring-time 'mid the
flowers ;
His sister smiled, his mother's thrilling kiss
Flushed his pale cheek with more than former bliss.

He woke, while listening to the words of love,
And heard the passing night-wind's deep farewell !
He saw the trees around, the clouds above,
And murmured, starting from that blessed spell,
“ O God ! the loved are gone—my dream is o'er ;
This is a forest—I've a home no more ! ”

. . . World-wanderer, thou art in a forest too !
Oh ! dream and smile as did that lonely boy :
There is a home for thee : the loved, the true,
Await thee there amid unfading joy ;
Weary and sad thou too shalt fall asleep :
The shades around thee shall be dim and deep.

Angels shall bear thee to thy home, and thou
Shalt wake amid the light of early years ;
Thy mother's real kiss shall thrill thy brow
And still the quivering of earth's lingering fears ;
Remembered voices, with an added strain
Of trembling love, will whisper Home Again !

THE DOVE AND THE ANGEL.

THE roses and stars were in blossom :

She leant by the lattice alone,
And a pet dove, white as a lily,
Flew out of the night with a moan,
And nestled down close in her bosom,
To hide from the wound in its own.

Tears rained on the snow of its plumage,
Tears rained on the golden moonshine ;

“ Ah, beautiful, tremulous darling,”

She murmured, “ my life is like thine—
Only I have no bosom to fly to,
My bird, as you fly into mine.”

The south-moon dropped under the shadow,

Yet she stayed to remember and weep,
Till—what was the wonderful Presence,
So quiet and holy and deep,

That stole through the dreams of the roses,
Till they shook out their sweetness in sleep ?

Ah, an Angel that once was a mortal
Flew out of the glories unknown,
And, like the white dove from the darkness
That came to her love with its moan,
She nestled down close in his bosom,
And hid from the wound in her own.

A PASSING YEAR.

[MDCCCLX.]

MY spirit saw a scene
Whose splendours were so terrible and bright
That the infinitude of mist between
The earth and sky scarce saved its eagle-sight
From being blasted. In the middle night
He stood, the Guardian Angel of the Years :
His wings—that could extend their quenchless light
Across eternity, and rock the spheres
With their immortal strength—were folded now,
Like a still veil of glory, on his brow.

One fiery star and vast,
A gem to note the year, forever more
Burned in his ancient crown ; and fierce and fast
Escaped the flame from out the one he wore,
Whose dimness vaguely settled on each shore
Along the seas of space ; and, pale and lone,
But kingly with the solemn pride of yore,
Clutching the grandeur of a shadowy throne,

As if to hold his royalty from Death,
One leaned beside him with an icy breath. .

Nor earth, nor heaven will save
Us from the Doom which claimed that mighty thing ;

But, then, who fears or thinks upon the grave—
That narrow dark through which the free may
spring

To the wide light beyond ? Who seeks to cling

With coward grasp to fetters and to strife ?

Death is the only halcyon whose white wing

Can still the billows of a restless life.

Yet, were the present peace, the future woe,

New storms are better than a calm we know.

He said, " My sceptre cast
Its shadows far as God's dominions lie ;

Storms blew their thunder-trumpets as I passed,
And lightnings followed me about the sky.

I clasped the unwilling worlds and heard them sigh

Against my breast with all their winds and waves ;

Ay, as my victor chariot hurried by,

Sun, star, and comet, like affrighted slaves,

Flung portions of their measured light below

Its silent wheels to make a triumph glow.

“I passed yon radiant crowd
Of constellations, and there knelt beside
The Cross upon whose like a God has bowed ;
I met the mourning Pleiades, and cried
To their lost sister in the unanswering tide
Of night ; I struck weird music from the Lyre,
And humbled old Orion’s sullen pride,
Who leaned against his scimitar of fire,
And, with submissive reverence and mute,
Acknowledged my imperious salute.

“Look, look—for all his deeds
Must pass before the sight of him who dies ;
Mine crowd the infinite spaces—but man needs
Not to be told of those whose scenery lies
Beyond the bounds he knows, for his dim eyes
See but the things I have around him wrought ;
He will not hear the dirge that soon must rise
For me in all the myriad realms his thought
May visit only by the hazy route
That glimmers round the reeling sails of Doubt.

“The shadow of his world,
Like a dark canvas spread before me seems :
There hides the hermit West, with cataracts whirled
Among the rocks, watching their foamy beams ;

There are the groves of myrrh, and diamond gleams,
Where—fair as if it erewhile floated to
Its own warm poets, in their lotus dreams,
As an ideal Aidenn, and there grew
Into reality—the Orient lies
Close to the morn 'mid birds of Paradise.

“There ice-mailed warders keep
The gates of silence by the auroral rays
Which fall above the cold-pressed North asleep,
Like a proud, pallid Queen, in the rich blaze
Of coloured lamps, upon whose bosom weighs
A dreary vision ; and there, too, the sweet,
Sun-worshipped South in languid beauty stays,
Like a sultana, caring but to meet
Her fiery lover 'mid her gorgeous bowers,
And, as his bride, be crowned with orange flowers.

“And, over all, there moves
The phantasm of my life. With joy and dread
I see it passing, and my memory proves
Its truth to nature. Roses white and red,
Whose leaves into the winds have long been shed,
And tremulous lily-bells, and jasmine blooms

Are there, as they had risen from the dead,
So like their early selves their lost perfumes
Seem blown about them ; and I hear the breeze
That used to kiss them sing old melodies.

“Above, the changing sky
Shows wonder-pictures to my fading eyes :
Now, the black armies of the clouds march by,
Now rainbows bloom, now golden moons arise.
Below, how varied too ! Now glitter lies
On gorgeous jewels, bridal-flowers and mirth ;
Now mourners pass, and fill the air with sighs,
To hide their coffins in the yawning earth ;
Now, with a pallid face and frenzied mind,
Cold, starving wretches ask if God is blind !

“Now reels a nightmare throne
From the crushed bosom of the Sicilies,
The South’s brief dream of blood wakes in the sun ;
Glad winds sing on the blue Italian seas,
And glad men bless me by their olive-trees.
Now, in the clouds above a younger land,
With awful eyes fixed on its destinies,
The frowning souls of its dead Glorious stand

And see a fiery madness, that would blast
God's Miracle of Freedom, kindling fast."

He fixed a dark, wild look
On his celestial watcher, as in hate ;
Then grasped him, till his passionless grandeur
shook,
And muttered : " Spirit, see the fate of fate
I've left upon mortality's estate.
And thou didst suffer all this ruin, thou
Whose office was to warn me ; 'tis too late
For me to give thee these reproaches now,
For I am growing cold—my deeds are done,
And thou shouldst blush for them, thou guilty one.

" I tell thee, thou shalt hear—
For, Guardian Angel of the Years, I swear
Thou art a traitor to thy God ! And fear
A traitor's fate, if thou again shalt dare
Neglect thy task. Then aid him who shall bear
The sceptre I resign to quench all wrong,
And kindle right—or, when I meet thee where
None may evade the truth, my oath, as strong
As aught except thy brother Lucifer's curse,
Shall drag thee down to share his doom or worse !

“Mortals, I go, I go.

Yet, though we part, it is to meet again ;

My ghost will come with noiseless step and slow
Along the twilights, whispering of my reign ;

And, in the night-times, oft a mystic strain

Shall strike your sleep, and ye shall know my tone,
Singing remembered airs, not all in vain,

And chorus them with an unconscious moan ;
And I must witness of you in the day

When earth and heaven shall melt in fire away.”

He drew the dark around
His ghastly face—the nations sighed farewell ;

He staggered from his throne—an awful sound
Rolled down from every system's every bell,
That tolled together once to make his knell,

And the resplendent crown-star, that had flashed
On the lone Angel's brow, grew black and fell—

Shattering among six thousand more it crashed.

I asked : “How many stay for him to wear ?”

I woke : and Midnight's silence filled the air.

OF A PARTING.

UNDER a calm of stars, my own,
Under a drooping crescent light,
You go, while fairy sounds are blown
Out of the dreams of winds, my own—
You go across the night;
But on some far-off strand of sunrise
Our hearts meet in a radiant bliss,
Not damp, like this!

You go; the calm of stars must go,
The crescent light, the fairy sounds;
Billows of cloud will overflow
The golden skies:—but you must go.
And in its stormy rounds
The dark will hear low, fluttering voices
Cry in my heart, like lonesome birds,
For your sweet words.

You go, and twilights made for love
Will gloom between us, dim with dew;

The spring-loosed music of the dove
Will search the emerald woods for love,
And I will long for you,
Among the blue and pearly blossoms
Far on the mossy hills, alone,
My own, my own.

But you must loose my hands and go.
Haste with those tremulous words of pain,
For I, most loved of all, I know
(The thought is full of tears) some go
And never come again ;—
So wait, and let me look forever
Into the tenderness that lies
In those deep eyes.

Ah ! you are gone ; and I—I hold
My vacant arms to all who part,
And weep for them, and long to fold
Those strangers close, and say : “I hold
Your sorrow in my heart ;”
But look—the calm of stars is o’er us,
And we go toward their lighted shore,
And part no more.

TO MARIAN ASLEEP.

THE full moon glimmers still and white,
Where yonder shadowy clouds unfold ;
The stars, like children of the Night,
Lie with their little heads of gold
On her dark lap : nor less divine,
And brighter, seems your own on mine.

My darling, with your snowy sleep
Folded around your dimpled form,
Your little breathings calm and deep,
Your mother's arms and heart are warm ;
You wear as lilies in your breast
The dreams that blossom from your rest.

Ah, must your clear eyes see ere long
The mist and wreck on sea and land,
And that old haunter of all song,
The mirage hiding in the sand ?
And will the dead leaves in the frost
Tell you of song and summer lost ?

And shall you hear the ghastly tales
From the slow, solemn lips of Time—
Of Wrong that wins, of Right that fails ;
Of trampled Want and gorgeous Crime ;
Of Splendour's glare in lighted rooms
And Famine's moan in outer glooms ?

Of armies in their red eclipse
That mingle on the smoking plain ;
Of storms that dash our mighty ships
With silks and spices through the main ;
Of what it costs to climb or fall—
Of Death's great Shadow ending all ?

But, baby Marian, do I string
The dark with darker rhymes for you,
Forgetting that you came in Spring,
The child of sun and bloom and dew,
And that I kissed, still fresh to-day,
The rosiest bud of last year's May ?

Forgive me, pretty one : I know,
Whatever sufferings onward lie,
Christ wore his crown of thorns below
To gain his crown of light on high ;
And when the lamp's frail flame is gone,
Look up : the stars will still shine on.

A DREAM'S AWAKENING.

SHUT in a close and dreary sleep,
Lonely and frightened and oppressed
I felt a dreadful serpent creep,
Writhing and crushing, o'er my breast.

I woke and knew my child's sweet arm,
As soft and pure as flakes of snow,
Beneath my dream's dark, hateful charm,
Had been the thing that tortured so.

And, in the morning's dew and light
I seemed to hear an angel say,
"The Pain that stings in Time's low night
May prove God's Love in higher day."

MEETING AN OLD MIRROR.

BELOVED of beautiful and eager eyes,
It had its honours from the guests below ;
But it went somewhat nearer to the skies
As it grew old, you know.

Still, from the gilded splendour of the day
That Vanity sees shining in its place,
I turned with yearning for the pleased, still way
It used to hold my face.

Far up the stair and shunned of faded eyes
I found the thing that I had loved before :
It took my face, grew dead-white with surprise,
Held it—then saw no more !

Suddenly blinded : for the Mirror shed
Tears for dim hair, it praised to suns gone by,
And One to whom once of it I gaily said,
“ My rival—dear as I ! ”

Companions, in our time, of pleasant lights,
I thought, and music and rich foreign blooms,
What shall we find for those fair evening-sights
In lonesome upper rooms ?

The misty Mirror showed a calm reproof,
Receiving there a higher company,
In dust and empty silence near the roof,
Than we were wont to see.

Its pride in jewelled reverence was gone,
And quiet tenderness was in its place,
That took the sweet stars, as they glimmered on
Through chill clouds, to its grace.

QUESTIONS OF THE HOUR.

[MARIAN, SIX YEARS OLD.]

“Do angels wear white dresses, say ?
Always, or only in the summer ? Do
Their birthdays have to come like mine, in May ?
Do they have scarlet sashes then, or blue ?

“When little Jessie died last night,
How could she walk to Heaven—it is so far ?
How did she find the way without a light ?
There wasn’t even any moon or star.

“Will she have red or golden wings ?
Then will she have to be a bird, and fly ?
Do they take men like presidents and kings
In hearses with black plumes clean to the sky ?

“How old is God? Has He grey hair?

Can He see yet? Where did He have to stay
Before—you know—He had made—Anywhere?

Whom does He pray to—when He has to pray?

“How many drops are in the sea?

How many stars?—well, then, you ought to know
How many flowers are on an apple-tree?

How does the wind look when it doesn't blow?

“Where does the rainbow end? And why

Did—Captain Kidd—bury the gold there? When
Will this world burn? And will the firemen try
To put the fire out with the engines then?

“If you should ever die, may we

Have pumpkins growing in the garden, so
My fairy godmother can come for me,
When there's a prince's ball, and let me go?

“Read Cinderella just once more——

What makes—men's other wives—so mean?” I
know

That I was tired, it may be cross, before
I shut the painted book for her to go.

Hours later, from a child's white bed

I heard the timid, last queer question start :

“Mamma, are you—my stepmother ?” it said.

The innocent reproof crept to my heart.

THE LITTLE STOCKINGS.

[HUNG UP FOR GIFTS ON CHRISTMAS EVE.]

HE will see sweet stockings, cunning and new,
Warm in scarlet, and dainty in white—
Stockings that never have crept in a shoe—
Waiting his morning's enchanted light.

And other glad stockings, that he should know—
Grown larger, perhaps, than they were last year!—
In many a pretty, half-sleepy row
They wonder, no doubt, if he is near!

This Saint of the children, who loves them so,
Fairily filling each precious space,
Will touch clear dreams with his kiss—and go
With tears, I think, in his tender face.

Ah, spite of his furs, he will shiver, I fear,
At the thought of some stockings, bright and small,
Whose curious looks are no longer here,
Awake for him, by the lonesome wall!

Oh, you whose little hands reach no more
Towards his grey, kind beard in their dimpled play,
Whose little feet passed through the great, dim Door,
With never a step nor a sound, away :

Have you found Another, who lights with love
His Birthday Tree for your charmed eyes ?
Do you see in its branches the snow-white Dove ?
Is it fair with the flowering fruit of the skies ?

A PRESIDENT AT HOME.¹

I PASSED a President's House to-day——

“A President, mamma, and what is that?”

Oh, it is a man who has to stay

Where bowing beggars hold out the hat

For something: a man who has to be

The Captain of every ship that we

Send with our darling flag to the sea:

The Colonel at home who has to command

Each marching regiment in the land.

This President now has a single room,

That is low and not much lighted, I fear;

Yet the butterflies play in the sun and gloom

Of his evergreen avenue, year by year;

¹ At North Bend, Ohio River—the tomb of General William Henry Harrison, ninth President of the United States of America.

And the child-like violets up the hill
Climb, faintly wayward, about him still ;
And the bees blow by at the wind's wide will ;
And the cruel river, that drowns men so,
Looks pretty enough in the shadows below.

Just one little fellow (named Robin) was there,
In a red Spring vest, and he let me pass
With that charming-careless, high-bred air

Which comes of serving the great. In the grass
He sat, half-singing, with nothing to do——
No, I did not see the President too :
His door was locked (what I say is true),
And he was asleep, and has been, it appears,
Like Rip Van Winkle, asleep for years !

A WALK TO MY OWN GRAVE.

[WITH THREE CHILDREN.]

THERE! do not stop to cry.

“The path is long?—we walk so slow?”

But we shall get there by and by.

Every step that we go

Is one step nearer, you know :

And your mother's grave will be

Such a pretty place to see.

“Will there be marble there,

With doves, or lambs, or lilies?” No.

Keep white yourselves. Why should you care

If they *are* as white as snow,

When the lilies can not blow,

And the doves can never moan,

Nor the lambs bleat—in the stone ?

You want some flowers ? Oh !

We shall not find them on the way.

Only a few brier-roses grow,

Here and there, in the sun, I say.

It is dusty and dry all day,

But at evening there is shade,

And—you will not be afraid ?

Ah, the flowers ? Surely, yes.

At the end there will be a few.

“Violets ? Violets ?” So I guess,

And a little grass and dew ;

And some birds—you want them blue ?

And a spring, too, as I think,

Where we will rest and drink.

Now kiss me and be good,

For you can go back home and play.

This is my grave here in the wood,

Where I, for a while, must stay.

Wait—will you always pray,

Though you are sleepy, at night ?

There ! do not forget me—quite.

Keep the baby sweetly dressed,
And give him milk and give him toys ;
Rock him, as I did, to his rest,
And never make any noise,
Brown-eyed girl and blue-eyed boys,
Until he wakes. Good-bye,
And—do not stop to cry !

MY WEDDING RING.

My heart stirred with its golden thrill
And fluttered closer up to thine,
In that blue morning of the June
When first it clasped thy love and mine.

In it I see the little room,
Rose-dim and hushed with lilies still,
Where the old silence of my life
Turned into music with "I will."

Oh, I would have my folded hands
Take it into the dust with me :
All other little things of mine
I'd leave in the bright world with thee.

*Sweet World, if you will hear me now :
I may not own a sounding Lyre
And wear my name upon my brow
Like some great jewel quick with fire.*

*But let me, singing, sit apart,
In tender quiet with a few,
And keep my fame upon my heart,
A little blush-rose wet with dew.*

NOTES.

(1) Polycrates, the too-fortunate King, whose story is told by Herodotus.

(2) The pathetic little episode to which this piece refers is related in the third book of Virgil's *Æneid*, lines 482-492, where the poet describes Æneas meeting Andromache during his wanderings, after the fall of Troy, with his son Ascanius (also called Iulus). To the latter Andromache gives some garments wrought by herself, and in presenting them she recalls her own boy Astyanax, who, in obedience to an oracle, had been thrown headlong from the walls of Troy and killed. This was after the death of Hector, his father, whose parting with Andromache—in which the child “headed like a star,” together with “the horse-hair plume,” is mentioned—forms one of the most famous passages in the *Iliad* of Homer. The passage in Virgil is literally as follows:—“Andromache, sad with the last parting, brings garments figured over with golden embroidery and a Phrygian cloak for Ascanius, and loads him with woven gifts, and thus speaks,—‘Take these, too, my boy, and may they be to thee mementoes of my handiwork, and bear witness to the lasting love of Andromache, Hector’s wife; take these last gifts of thy friend, O only image remaining to me of my Astyanax. Just such eyes, just such hands, just such features he had, and he would now be growing up in equal age with thee.’”

(3) Written after reading certain newspaper discussions as to the treatment of the “tramp.”

By the same Author.

MRS. PIATT'S SELECT POEMS.

A VOYAGE TO THE FORTUNATE ISLES, AND OTHER POEMS.

BY SARAH M. B. PIATT.

Small Crown 8vo, Cloth, gilt top, 5s.

PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES BY HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & Co.,
BOSTON AND NEW YORK, PRICE \$1.50.

Extracts from British Critical Opinions.

The Academy, December 5, 1885.

'The author of these poems and her work are well known on the other side of the Atlantic, and two tiny volumes of verse have recently introduced her very favourably to English readers. The present book contains a rich and excellently selected gathering from Mrs. Piatt's various works, issued in America, and it will, undoubtedly, win a warm welcome from the lovers of poetry among us, and extend the radius of her influence and reputation. Mrs. Piatt's verses are characterised by a distinct and pleasing originality. . . . Nothing more unfailingly distinguishes her poems than the solid kernel of fresh, original thought and feeling in each of them—thought and feeling which are expressed with careful and conscientious artistry. . . . Not a few of the most delicate and successful pieces of the book are to be found in the section titled, "In Company with Children." Here the womanly nature of the poet has full scope. . . . The temptation to quote further from this charming volume is almost irresistible, but we must leave the reader to discover the rest of its dainty and pathetic things for himself. The book entitles its author to a very honourable place in the roll of women poets of our century.'

The St. James's Gazette, November 21, 1885.

'We find that Mrs. Piatt's Muse is the Muse of the American Girl. . . . And we confess, for our own part, that the more completely she is the Muse of the American Girl the better we like her. There is real originality in such pieces as "If I were a Queen," "Caprice at Home," and "After the Quarrel." The reflection on Cleopatra—

"No coward of my conqueror's race
Should offer me his blood, I know,
If I were a Queen—"

is delightfully in the spirit of free Transatlantic criticism. Rhythmically, too, Mrs. Piatt is at her best in these lighter pieces. In "Caprice at Home" there is a pettishness of movement in the verse corresponding excellently to its mood. Take for example, the lines:—

"No, I will not say good-bye,
Not good-bye, nor anything ;"

or

"Everything I want I miss.
Oh, a precious world is this "

Very arch, too, is "After the Quarrel," where one girl is consoling another for the loss of her lover :—

"But he will not come?—Why, then,
Is no other within call?
There are men and men, and men—
And these men are brothers all!
Each sweet fault of his you'll find
Just as sweet in all his kind."

There is so much room in our literature for verse which is playful without being exactly humorous, that it is to be hoped Mrs. Piatt will pursue further a vein in which she is so eminently successful. We have no wish, however, to disparage the more serious efforts of this pleasing and unpretentious writer. Like Miss Ingelow and other disciples of the great but unequal poetess of "Casa Guidi Windows," Mrs. Piatt's mood alternates between a fantastic regret and a heart-broken idealism. She bewails mystically the dead infancies of her growing children, and has dreams about them in a glorified perfection. All this is well summed up in the narrative poem from which the volume takes its title—the poem which tries to force on us the conclusion that

"We leave the Fortunate Isles behind,
The Fortunate Isles to find ;"

and abounds in vaguely suggestive imagery, as of the butterflies—

"That glitter, homesick for the form
And lost sleep of the worm."

"In "Two Veils" and "Her Cross and Mine," Mrs. Piatt has touched skilfully on the contrast between the world's perils and the safe shelter of the convent. "The Altar at Athens" is a rather striking presentation of the enigma of contending creeds. "The Gift of Empty Hands" and "Everything" are fables of deft invention if trite morality. The first stanza of "To-day" is worth quotation for its easy rendering of a plaintive mood :—

"Ah, real thing of bloom and breath,
I cannot love you while you stay.
Put on the dim, still charm of death,
Fade to a phantom, float away,
And let me call you Yesterday !"

"Asking for Tears" has something of the accent of "Sonnets from the Portuguese." In the more dramatic pieces, like "The Palace-Burner," "There was a Rose," and "A Wall Between," these abrupt artifices are less inappropriate. "A Wall Between," which presents in some nine pages the scene of a husband coming in priest's disguise to the death-bed of his neglected wife, seems to be admirably adapted for recitation. The writer preserves here, as always, both delicacy and taste. The piece is a good one. But we recur to our preference of Mrs. Piatt as the lyrist of whim, the Muse of the American Girl.'

'This woman-poet's poems come to us with a New World freshness and fragrance, superadded to the sweetness and tenderness, which are among the things that never grow old. Some of the poems, in their largeness and freedom, their boldness in seizing, and crying aloud the vague doubts and marvellings which have wearied and pained us all at times, not the less that we have scarcely dared to look them in the face, read like a revelation—a revelation of one's own heart, of a woman's heart. The book is essentially a woman's book, though, in its breadth of treatment, it has often a masculine quality of strength,—it is the book of a woman who is also a wife, and the mother of children, and in the noble attributes of a developed womanliness, the poetry of it must rank almost with the highest. . . . Three women's names suggest themselves to the present writer, as those of distinct and individual singers in our own day—Christina Rossetti, Jean Ingelow, and Alice Meynell, whose one exquisite volume "Preludes," is an embodiment of the purest poetry; and to those three names Sarah Piatt's may now be added as a fourth, for her marked originality and freshness are wonderful, in an age more than a score of hundred years after Solomon bewailed the staleness of all things under the sun. The tenderness, the purity of the book, is beyond all praise; and the curious current and undertone of pathos running through the highest strain—a sadness entirely natural, and not at all a literary quality, as so much present-day sadness seems to be—gives the work an ennobling gravity. From this true, sweet poet one wishes to quote largely, feeling that the poems speak best for their own excellence; but where all is perfect, there is a difficulty in selection. . . . The poem which gives the first book its name is wise and beautiful, and "A Wall Between" contains some of the best things the poet has given us. . . . It has some wonderful passages. . . . Perhaps the short poems are the most perfect, and the style at its best is limpidly clear. . . . Any notice of this book would be incomplete, however abundant its citations, if it failed to quote from the poems concerning children, which, perhaps, more than any other feature, set the book apart from any other book we have ever read. Its insight into child-life, the *naïveté* of a child's thoughts, here so accurately rendered, will make the book especially lovable to grown lovers of children, though here, perhaps, it stops short; it will hardly reach the children themselves, as Hans Andersen, the prophet of children, does; but rather like Mr. R. L. Stevenson's "Child's Garden of Verses," it will make the grown reader sigh and wonder at the vivid reflection from his own childhood. . . . And now, with little further quotation, we must leave this lovely and lovable book, in which is contained the cream's cream, the best perfection of the author's work. Let all who love poetry, and happily they are many, read the book for themselves, and know the delight we have felt in its reading. For the delicate grace of the book, the yearning sadness which fills one with a pain better than pleasure, for this laying open of a beautiful heart, we are deeply thankful. . . . We have tried to say little and quote much, because we felt how poorly we could say all the book makes us feel—one could say it, perhaps, better in verse than in prose, where enthusiasm finds hardly a fitting vehicle of expression. Only we thank the writer for the gift she has given us and the world—a gift as perfect and spontaneous as the song of a blackbird, as passionate and innocent as the heart of a rose.'

The Westminster Review, July 1886.

'Many of Mrs. Piatt's verses are concerned with the sayings and doings of children. We are of those who hold that both the pathos and the humour of the

nursery should be reserved for home consumption, but for those who think otherwise with regard to the "Kingdom of Heavenites," as Coleridge called babies, we can safely recommend Mrs. Piatt. Among the more striking poems in this volume are "A Voyage to the Fortunate Isles," "The Longest Death-Watch," and "Twelve Hours Apart." We select for quotation a double quatrain, entitled "Broken Promise."

Merry England (Review of Professor Robertson's "Children of the Poets"), March 1887.

'Mrs. Piatt is an American writer not yet known to many in England, though quickly recognised by a few. She never writes without thoughts, and her thoughts, though not always concentrated, are always distinct, and with distinctness they have a rare distinction. This beauty of thought will always be, in spite of the perfect things that have been done in mere form, the supreme merit of poetry and of all literature. But as regards utterance also Mrs. Piatt does exquisitely, having a restraint of tone, a moderation of emphasis, of length, which show firm and careful art; and a quite simple vocabulary. One of her loveliest poems is this in the "Children of the Poets." It is headed "Last Words," and is spoken over a little bed at night.'

The Pictorial World, June 3, 1886.

'Mrs. Piatt is an American woman of genius, and the pensive tone and sweet natural music which distinguish her verse have produced, in "A Voyage to the Fortunate Isles," etc., poems of a delicate beauty, not easy to equal, much less surpass, on either side of the Atlantic. The thought, the expression of these poems are alike purely womanly. Mrs. Piatt studies no model, and takes no pattern for her work; she simply expresses herself; hence her verse is just the transparent mantle of her individuality. The natural refinement, the ready sympathy, the tender sentiment, the quiet grace of a thoroughly womanly woman reveal themselves quite unconsciously in every poem; and the musical quality of the verse increases the impression that the reader is listening to the heart-utterances of one of the Imogens or Mirandas to be met with now seldom outside the radiant land where Shakespeare's imagination reigns supreme. . . . The poems "In Company with Children" contain some of the most distinctive and original of Mrs. Piatt's work. She has especial power of entering into the child life, and she is not afraid to let the children speak in her verse as they speak in life. "My Babes in the Wood," "Playing Beggars," "The Little Boy I Dreamed About," "The Baby's Brother," are a few of many poems which occupy in the realm of verse a quiet corner entirely their own. . . . Mrs. Piatt will, we doubt not, as her poems become known to English readers, become popular, or, we should rather say, dear to a wide circle mainly composed of members of her own sex, for she supplies the adequate expression for women whose hearts are tender and true like her own.'

The Dublin Evening Mail, April 7, 1886.

'If Mrs. Piatt's "Irish Garland" contains poetry like that in the volume before us, it ought to be placed forthwith in the best hundred Irish books. . . . Originality, simplicity, tenderness, and a profoundly pathetic sense of things are the notes of Mrs. Piatt's muse. In many passages she reminds us of Mrs. Barrett Browning, but she is more lyrical, less rhetorical. . . . America may be proud of Mrs. Piatt, and we believe is so.'

The Literary World, January 1, 1886.

'One of the finest poems in the book is "The Brother's Hand," founded upon a story of the American Civil War. There is a good deal of power, passion, and pathos in it. It is the longest poem in the book, and is marked by much true feeling and great narrative skill.'

London Figaro, February 20, 1886.

'It was high time, though, that acquaintance was made with so charming a writer, who, while reminding us of our Jean Ingelow and Adelaide Proctor, has indubitable originality—and originality, too, of a very rare kind—of her own. . . . In so short a notice it is, indeed, difficult to even name the beauties of her characteristic muse. Allusion must be made, however, to her wonderful, and, as it would seem, intuitive power of analysing child-nature. Many of her poems deal with children, and her happiest and most winsome touches are to be found in them. Mrs. Piatt possesses genuine imagination, and, moreover, that dramatic instinct which helps so greatly to make a poem intense and vivid. . . . But to multiply quotations is impossible, and we must be content with giving the two stanzas with which Mrs. Piatt concludes this delightful volume. She says:—

"Sweet World, if you will hear me now :

I may not own a sounding Lyre
And wear my name upon my brow
Like some great jewel quick with fire.

But let me, singing, sit apart,
In tender quiet with a few,
And keep my fame upon my heart,
A little blush-rose wet with dew."

There is the melody of real poetry here.'

The Saturday Review, March 13, 1886.

'Of all the concourse of singers, ungallantly described in their own land as "female poets," Mrs. Piatt is the most racy and, in a word, the most American. Mr. Stedman finds her charming "at her best," and Miss Preston most judiciously commends her delightful poems of children. Mr. Howells praises her that "she has not written like a man," and the Boston *Repository* takes Mr. Howells to task for praising "the feminine quality" of Mrs. Piatt's muse. For our part, we are at issue with the *Repository* lady (as we must assume the critic to be), and are touched with the felicity of Mr. Howells' remarks. The new selection of Mrs. Piatt's poems should be most welcome to all who seek in American poetry something more than a pale reflex of the British commodity. In the goodly company of poetesses, all dight in their singing robes, Mrs. Piatt's part is that of the *ingénue*. Her poems, with all their whim and inconstancy of mood, are charmingly sincere, artless, piquant, and full of quaint surprise. Her pathos is not less individual, though we like her best in her "Dramatic Persons and Moods," in such poems as "Sometime," "If I were a Queen," "After the Quarrel," "Enchanted," and the like. The reflections of the speaker in the second poem in rejecting the example of all historic queens are exquisitely girl-like and natural, even to the rejection of Cleopatra:—

Then she of Egypt—with the asp
To drain my deadly beauty dry?—
To see my Roman lover clasp
His sword with surer love, and die

Closer to it than me? Not so.
 No desert-snake with nursing grace
 Should draw my fierce heart's fiercest glow;
 No coward of my conqueror's race
 Should offer me his blood, I know—
 If I were a Queen."

'Very startling is the quaint epigram in the first stanza of "Marble or Dust?":—

"A child, beside a statue, said to me,
 With pretty wisdom very sadly just,
 'That man is Mr. Lincoln, Mama. He
 Was made of marble; we are made of dust.'"

The Nation (Dublin), December 5, 1885.

'The titular poem in Mrs. Piatt's collection, "A Voyage to the Fortunate Isles," is an allegory whose lesson is, that in seeking for distant happiness we miss that which is within our grasp. The thought is an old one that has furnished food for meditation to the poet and philosopher since the earliest ages. Paradise itself was not free from these illusory ambitions. Love of change and desire of power and knowledge were what urged our first parents to their great transgression. It is no slight praise of Mrs. Piatt's poem, to say that, on a theme coeval with the world, and that in every generation has found its exponents among the greatest poets, our author has found a new and attractive figure by which to convey the old but ever necessary warning against restlessness and discontent. . . . In her description of children and their ways Mrs. Piatt could not be surpassed for accuracy and pathos. With intensified womanly fondness her whole heart goes out to them, as she watches their movements with the deep interest of her loving, sympathetic nature. . . . We would wish, did the limits of our space permit, to consider more at length these extraordinary and, with all their sadness, really beautiful poems, as they are well worthy of minute and careful study."

The Graphic, January 16, 1886.

'It is amply borne out by the present collected edition of her poems, the music and finish of which it is almost superfluous to praise. But, whilst acknowledging the author's great gifts, we cannot join in the chorus of unlimited praise which seems to be the rule in America. She has been compared to Mrs. Browning, and undoubtedly, the influence of the great English poet-woman is most apparent—one most powerful piece, "A Wall Between," is almost worthy of the author of "Bertha in the Lane." . . . The book is a striking one . . . and must not be neglected by any one who would form a just estimate of modern poetic art.'

The Scotsman, January 1, 1886.

'There is a fugitive beauty, a magical suggestiveness about her poetry.'

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The Scotsman, December 26, 1884.

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The Academy, March 21, 1885.

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The Graphic, July 11, 1885.

'Pathos distinguishes the best pieces, such as, "On the Pier at Queenstown," and "The Confession of My Neighbour," but there is a vein of quaint humour in places, as in a charming little childlike poem, "Comfort through a Window."'

The Saturday Review, July 11, 1885.

'Mrs. Piatt's slender volume risks overlooking by its mere slightness. It contains one poem, "The Gift of Tears," which for deep-hearted suggestiveness and concentrated pathos might have proceeded from Mrs. Browning. The kinship we claim for it is no light thing, and it is not lightly claimed.'

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'Ought to endear her to every Irish Heart.'

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The Saturday Review, May 15, 1886.

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The Lady, June 17, 1886.

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The Freeman's Journal, June 18, 1886.

'Mrs. Piatt's little book, beautifully produced . . . adds one other to the many reasons already piled up for Ireland's love and gratitude to America and its people.'

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CHILD'S WORLD BALLADS.

BY SARAH M. B. PIATT.

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'Mrs. Piatt's claim to be considered one of the chief—if, indeed, not at the head—of American poetesses, has been generally acknowledged by the press of this country. She is at her best in poems dealing with child-life; though not necessarily in poems intended to be read by children. . . . The longest ballad in the collection, "Three Little Emigrants," is not unfamiliar. . . . It is a tale of three little children, who, resolving to seek their fortunes in the Far West, escaped from their nursery and wandered down to Cork Harbour, but, as one of the babies laments, the ship sailed without them. "Did the grey Admiral from Spain look westward with such longing eyes?" asks the author in concluding her narrative, with a touch of that highest form of humour which is nearly akin to sentiment. "The Child Mozart and St. John of Bohemia" is a lovely little ballad, describing how the boy musician was taken from his poverty-stricken home to play at the Court of Maria Theresa, and how he wanted to marry his new baby friend, Marie Antoinette. Mrs. Piatt's poems, as already intimated, are not intended to be read by young children; to older ones they appeal in many ways. Indeed, it may be said that the child who is too old to appreciate them is dead to poetry.'

The Dublin Evening Mail, July 13, 1887.

'Thus gracefully does Mrs. Piatt embroider her humble theme. *In tenui labor*, one may say of her, *at tenuis non gloria* to have written such lines. . . . Mrs. Piatt may have written these poems for children, but we should think poorly of the taste of the adult who did not appreciate their high poetic quality.'

The Nation (Dublin), July 16, 1887.

'There are just ten pieces in Mrs. Piatt's latest little volume, and if we were to quote all the exquisite poetry contained in it, we would quote the whole ten. That would be piracy, and yet if we were ever tempted to break for the benefit of our readers that literary commandment which says, "Thou shalt not steal," it is on the present occasion. The next best thing we can do for our friends is to advise them to go and procure the little book at once. The ten small poems are ten gems.'

The Cork Constitution, July 13, 1887.

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The Irish Monthly, August 1887.

'It comes to us fittingly with a clustered group of little children's heads shining from the soft white covers. Once again the children have made the inspiration of this most delicate and whimsical muse, and once again the grown-up world may gladly stand still to listen. The book has all the quaintness and *naïveté* which one has learned to expect from Mrs. Piatt, and also the hint of tears in its laughter which is so great a charm in this writer's work. . . . Her tiny volume is very exquisitely produced, and, small as it is, may be trusted to win its way to high honour and into many hearts.'

The Liverpool Mercury, August 17, 1887.

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The Weekly Register (London), July 21, 1886.

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The Literary World, November 1887.

'Nothing could be more natural, for the author has an extraordinary insight into a child's way of expressing its thoughts. We cannot do better than to quote, without further comment, one of these charming little poems.'

The Pictorial World, August 1887.

'A little volume as choice in its contents as it is dainty in its exterior. . . . The contents . . . will become as thorough household words with children of a larger growth, as, say, "The Water-Babies," or Mrs. Ewing's "Jackanapes." Needs not at this date to enlarge upon Mrs. Piatt's poetical gifts, upon the wealth of melody distinguishing her verse, or on the humour and pathos which it embodies. But it may be frankly said that never has she written in a more sympathetic strain, or been seen to greater advantage than in this pretty, tiny book. What could be tenderer or more moving in its half-humorous pathos than that picture of the three babies who set out to look for their Atlantis, only to find at last that the ship had sailed without them? In this weary world one can hardly smile at such a story. How like an echo from Andersen is "The Watch of a Swan."'

The Graphic, September 10, 1887.

'A most delightful little volume of verse. . . . Apart from her poetic gifts, which as every one knows are great, Mrs. Piatt has the rare one of a delicate sense of humour; nothing could be better of its kind than the idea of the child at Holyrood; and the "Three Little Emigrants" is charming. If this lady did not write so well on graver themes, one could wish that she would always write for those of us who are children either in years or in heart. . . . The little volume is as dainty to look at as it is pleasant to read.'

ELLIOT STOCK, 62 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

THE WITCH IN THE GLASS, AND OTHER POEMS.

BY SARAH M. B. PIATT.

Small Crown 8vo, Cloth, gilt top, 3s. 6d.

PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES BY HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & Co.,
BOSTON AND NEW YORK, PRICE \$1.

The Athenæum, March 23, 1889.

'It is a pleasure to turn to Mrs. Piatt's healthy and humorous poetry. There is no need at this time of day to assert her claim to recognition on our side of the Atlantic—has not her genius been honoured by a hundred pens? and have we not ourselves already given our good word to her "Irish Garland," and to various other happy manifestations of her peculiar vein of pathos and piquancy? Mr. Howells has rightly praised her "for not writing like a man," and it is just this feminine insight, this fortunate tact in thought and phrase, that gives her verses their unique and incommunicable charm. She is no literary Medusa whose frown freezes the hapless reader into stone, but a loving, nimble-minded, sympathetic woman, with a marvellous knack of entering (like our own ever-to-be-lamented Mrs. Ewing) into the queer fancies and innocent mystifications of childhood. What could be better in this connection than the following lines, supposed to be addressed by a well-to-do urchin, surfeited with civilisation, to a tramp outside the window . . . ? From "The Confession of my Neighbour"—the story of one to whom wealth came only "when her head was white," and she had lost her nearest and dearest by death or separation—we quote the last stanza, which throbs with genuine emotion, delicately suggested and (as in all Mrs. Piatt's work that we have seen) none the less effective that it is so free from over-emphasis:—

"Oh, if I only could have back my boys,
With their lost gloves and books for me to find,
Their scattered playthings and their pleasant noise!
. . . I sit here in the splendour growing blind,
With hollow hands that backward reach, and ache
For the sweet trouble which the children make!"

There is plenty of room in the world yet for verse of this quality. It is exquisitely fresh and wholesome—the unaffected utterance of one who, to use Wordsworth's delightful phrase, is "not too bright and good for human nature's daily food."

The Scotsman, December 3, 1888.

'Mrs. Piatt may claim to be the laureate of little girls by virtue of the series of small books which culminates in "The Witch in the Glass, etc." Her poems are like those of Mr. Stevenson in this respect, that they reflect the moods of childhood with wonderful insight, without being such verses as a child would readily understand or enjoy. The most delicate of the pieces in this volume are in this manner. There are others which will endear the little volume to lovers of poetry in general

and to admirers of Mrs. Piatt in particular. The poem which gives the book its title may be quoted as a characteristic specimen. . . . But there is not any piece in all the volume that does not please by its delicate suggestiveness of thought and grace of verse.'

Truth.

'I must recommend to you strongly Mrs. Piatt's "The Witch in the Glass," wherein you have the American muse in all its changefulness, ranging from the delicate *esprit* of the opening poem to the poignancy of "The Night Cometh." Mrs. Piatt is the best woman poet America has produced, and is, perhaps, the first woman to reproduce in poetry with a passionate sincerity all a woman's varying emotions.'

The Graphic, February 2, 1889.

'The poems are largely charged with child-life, and with much power and sweetness does the author give expression to the *naïve* thoughts and imaginings of the young. One of the most simple and yet taking of these poems is "The Answer of the Gardener." The gardener has planted the tree, and the boy asks him, "with wonder in his smile,"—"Why don't you put the leaves on, though?"

'The gardener, with a reverent air,
Lifted his eyes, took off his hat—
'The Other Man, the One up there,'
He answered, 'He must look to that.'

The very young American girl is allowed to soliloquise with most amusing childish worldliness in "After Her First Party." Altogether, Mrs. Piatt is very bright, correct, and pleasant in her versification, and there is real pathos and piquancy in her child-pictures.'

The Saturday Review, January 12, 1889.

'A new volume of her charming and vigorous verses. In "A New Knight" and "The Story of Little Henry" she has caught the real spirit of childhood—a feat which many greater writers have essayed in vain.'

Figaro, August 31, 1889.

'For those who have been privileged to read Mrs. Piatt's former volumes it is unnecessary to multiply quotations, for they will assuredly get her latest work for themselves; whilst those of our readers to whom the sweet though pensive music of her muse is unknown would do well to make themselves acquainted with "The Witch in the Glass."'

Dublin Evening Mail, December 26, 1888.

'Here is a thing as pathetic as Wordsworth's "We are Seven" ["One of two"]. . . . But we might quote every piece in the volume as an illustration of its merits. Mrs. Piatt does no slovenly work. Every verse of hers is like the spray of a rose-bush in June, and the roses are of the most exquisite tint and perfume.'

Public Opinion, March 1, 1889.

'Much of it is of slight texture; but even the slightest are good.'

ELLIOT STOCK, 62 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

AN IRISH WILD FLOWER, ETC.

BY SARAH M. B. PIATT.

*Small Crown 8vo, Cloth, gilt top. Post Free.*PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES BY FREDERICK A. STOKES
COMPANY, NEW YORK.

The Academy, September 5, 1891.

'It is in short poems that Mrs. Piatt excels. The one which gives its name to the book, "An Irish Wild-flower" (suggested by the sight of a barefooted child by a castle), is complete in eight lines. . . . This seems to me absolutely perfect, the loveliest Irish growth of this sad summer. . . . Finest, if not most beautiful, among Mrs. Piatt's octaves is the one entitled "A Reproach," addressed to Ireland. The Shan Van Vocht is a shameful name for Ireland's sons to have given her. Walt Whitman has made perhaps the best that poet could make of it in his metreless, rhymeless, most unmusical, but most powerful and pathetic "Old Ireland;" but Mrs. Piatt has done better in treating Ireland not as a lonely beldame, but as a mother "beautiful, cruel," and, I dare think, *young*, with her wild brood about her feet. . . . The book has no political colouring, and is the work of an artist, not of an "orator." This makes it not only gracious, but timely.'

The Irish Monthly, September 1891.

'This slight volume is for all its slightness worthy of the gifted woman whom we would fain call an American Irishwoman—an American indeed, but sojourning in Ireland, and full of kindly Irish sympathies, as this book very touchingly testifies. As the fastidious critic of *The Athenæum* says, "there is no need at this time of day to assert Mrs. Piatt's claim to recognition on our side of the Atlantic—has not her genius been honoured by a hundred pens?" . . . In the volume before us, it is easy to discern what the English critic just quoted ascribes to her—"the feminine insight, the fortunate tact in thought and phrase that gives her verses their unique and incommunicable charm." Each little poem—for she is fond of condensing her thought into eight lines—has a soul in it.'

The Spectator, April 2, 1892.

'"A Funeral on the Lee" is the best thing in the book, not inadequate to the striking scene which it commemorates.'

The Athenæum, January 9, 1892.

'They have that charm which has before now been pointed out as the special characteristic of Mrs. Piatt's verse; and if it can be wished that now and then when

they have a tale to indicate or a meaning to imply, their expression were somewhat less indistinct, it must be remembered that a certain suggestive indistinctness—an indistinctness veiling while it reveals, in itself a true poetic quality—is an innate particularity of the author's style and a concomitant cause of much of its attractiveness. Another particularity is that she keeps her readers sympathising with her even while she is saying what in itself is outside their sympathy.'

The Independent (Dublin), January 11, 1892. (Katharine Tynan.)

'In Mrs. Piatt's poetry there is nothing artificial to complain of. Exquisite art there often is, but there is naturalness sometimes almost poignant, the nature of one counting time by heart-throbs. America has produced no such woman in poetry as Mrs. Piatt, and on this side of the Atlantic there are few women, indeed, who could be ranked with her. She has done what no woman of the Eastern Continent, old as it is, has done. She has expressed the poetry of womanhood. One would imagine that such an old cry in the hearts of women, that some woman would have uttered it in verse; but we have had no adequate expression of it. Mrs. Browning essayed it, indeed, but touching the string was at her weakest, as she always was when unrestrainedly impassioned. Mrs. Piatt has passion, intense, but not tense like Mrs. Browning's, when the string was touched too sharply; and except in the sonnets and a few other exceptions, when was she capable of restraint in her art? . . . Mrs. Piatt is as chary of elaborating her thoughts as Heine; and she is wise, for she has always a thought so simple and direct that to explain it is to attenuate its quality. Her metres, too, are as simple as those of the German lyrics. . . . This saddest of all the Muses is not so far removed from laughter: for example, two of the prettiest poems in this little blue and white book are quaintly and delicately humorous.'

Mrs. L. C. Moulton's London letter in Boston (U.S.A.) Herald.

'There are always two notes in Mrs. Piatt's work—the note of passion and the note of mystery. She writes out of her heart, and she sees sights unseen by others and hears sounds to which other ears are deaf. . . . I must give you just one more poem, which plays at being what a child thinks as he looks at the state of things in this Happy Island—at the idle people who do nothing and have everything, and the working people, who do everything and have nothing ["His Argument"].'

The Cork Examiner.

'The temptation to further quote from this delightful little volume is strong.

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AN ENCHANTED CASTLE, AND OTHER POEMS:

PICTURES, PORTRAITS AND PEOPLE IN IRELAND.

BY SARAH M. B. PIATT.

Small Crown 8vo, Cloth, gilt top, 3s. 6d.

The Queen, July, 22, 1893.

'Perhaps it may not be too much to say that no more notable or charming book of verse has ever been contributed by a foreign resident to illustrate some aspects of the life and romantic atmosphere of Ireland.'

The Times, July 7, 1893.

'The writer touches the life, but happily not the politics, of Ireland with a pen which is felicitous, sympathetic, and melodious.'

The Manchester Examiner, July 26, 1893.

'The land itself is to her an enchanted island, and she is never tired of singing its praises. She also evinces a hearty sympathy with the people, of whom she gives many bright and pleasant pictures.'

The Saturday Review, October 7, 1893.

'They deal with present-day scenes and events, and with old legends and romantic lore, and in both descriptions of lyric the author's personality is strongly revealed, and often with delightful piquancy. Where so much is characteristic of the singer, and so many of the songs really singable and true singing, there is no need to cite examples of Mrs. Piatt's lyrical gift.'

The Scotsman, July 3, 1893.

'The poems always give expression to a strong and tender sympathy, not with the national aspirations of the Irish, but with the lovable humanities in their character. The charm of the book is a strong one, however difficult to characterise; but Mrs. Piatt, familiar to every reader of poetry in America, is already widely enough known here to make it a praise of a book to say that it is characteristic of her. The special knowledge of the mind and heart of children, which is, perhaps, the most distinctive note of her poetry, comes out in the present volume in more than one delightful instance, and the book will be read with a warm enjoyment by lovers of poetry in general, and in particular by every one who can appreciate the better side of the Irish character.'

The Academy, September 2, 1893.

'Mrs. Piatt's songs are the delightful outcome of a nature which is the home of all the emotions that become concentrated in poetry; and he is a poor dullard who can rise from the perusal of "An Enchanted Castle" and say there is no sweet

price paid for his time. Mrs. Piatt is greatly gifted. She is capable of fashioning flawless lyrics; she knows the rare trick of properly poisoning humour; she is a mistress of the art of writing poetry for children that appeals to the father and mother. . . . It is no easy matter to quote from a book wherein the contents are of such equal value. . . . It is no exaggeration to say that every page of these ninety-six is graced by some airy beauty of expression or thought. . . . If home-sickness can always result in such a poem as "A Word with a Skylark," we cannot wish Mrs. Piatt in America again.'

The Daily Chronicle, August 4, 1893.

'Her "pictures, portraits, and people in Ireland" have a naive charm of artless sincerity and sunny good nature. Mrs. Piatt is especially happy in her treatment of Irish legends, as in "The Bishop's Thrush." She succeeds as few poets in preserving the true feeling of wonderfulness in her narratives.'

The Freeman's Journal, August 4, 1893.

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The Speaker, July 22, 1893.

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United Ireland, September 16, 1893.

'Whatever be the nature of her Irish sympathies, they are genuine and sincere. Witness her touching verses on a very frequent scene at Queenstown, the mother on the pier, her son sailing away from her forever. . . . Note again how sweetly and affectionately she addresses "The Ivy of Ireland." . . . Need we quote more to make this little book sought for by all who love pleasant and graceful, and most sweet and companionable poetry? or to prove that we have done right—and that Mrs. Piatt herself does not say otherwise—in naturalising her among the women singers of Erin?'

Sylvia's Journal, September, 1893.

'A book which every poetry lover will want to possess.'

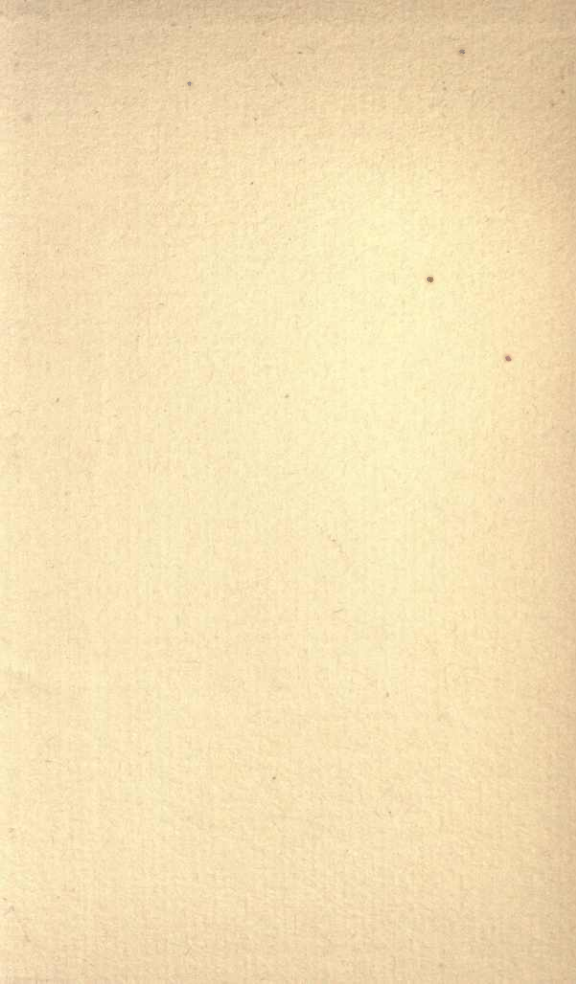
Cork Examiner, August 2, 1893.

'Her book has a charm which is quite uncommon, and we shall be astonished if it does not more than indicate the reputation her works have already acquired. It is not, perhaps, out of place to remark that the exquisitely printed volume bears on its cover a sketch of Monkstown Castle from the pencil of a local amateur.'

The Independent (Dublin), October 14, 1893.

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